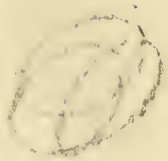
PARKE (W. T.). 40 *Years principal Oboist, T. Roy. Cov. Gar.,* Musical Memoirs comprising an Account of the General State of Music in England from the first commemoration of Handel in 1784 to 1830 interspersed with numerous Anecdotes, Musical, Histrionic, etc., 2 vols, cr. 8vo 1830

3103283

Inglis. 50 :

Archibald Haddon

2 Vols



MUSICAL MEMOIRS.

VOL. I.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2011 with funding from
National Library of Scotland

http://www.archive.org/details/musicalmemoirsv100park

MUSICAL MEMOIRS;

COMPRISING

AN ACCOUNT

OF THE

GENERAL STATE OF MUSIC IN ENGLAND,

FROM THE FIRST COMMEMORATION OF HANDEL,
IN 1784, TO THE YEAR 1830.

INTERSPERSED WITH NUMEROUS ANECDOTES,
MUSICAL, HISTRIONIC, &c.

BY W. T. PARKE,

FORTY YEARS PRINCIPAL OBOIST TO THE
THEATRE ROYAL COVENT GARDEN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,
NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1830.

PRINTED BY A. J. VALPY, RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.

PREFACE.

"When Music, heavenly maid! was young" the ancients celebrated her with all that fervour and felicity of expression for which they have been so universally and so justly famed; and the moderns, no less ambitious, though more feeble, have offered her all homage, notwithstanding the hoydenish tricks and caprices she has of late displayed, to the deep regret of all her rational admirers. For my own part, never having tasted of the Pierian spring, and therefore possessing only the *cacoethes scribendi,* (the zeal without the learning,) I must content myself with observing, in my own plain manner, that in writing an Account of the General State of Music in England

during a series of years, I have chosen for its commencement the year 1784, the period when the first commemoration of Handel took place in Westminster Abbey, under the august patronage of his late Majesty, George the Third, and have continued it up to the year 1830, when it was considered that the art had greatly advanced towards perfection; thus comprising a period of forty-seven years, passed under my own immediate observation. I must here remark, that the whole of the events contained therein transpired during my professional engagements at the Theatres Royal Drury Lane, Covent Garden, Haymarket, and the King's Theatre,—the Professional and Salomon's Concerts,—the *two* Ladies' Concerts,—the Nobility's Sunday Concerts,—the Vocal Concerts,—the Royal Concerts,—Vauxhall Gardens,—Country Music-meetings, &c.,—in all of which I held a prominent situation as a performer on the *Oboe*, and also as a Composer.

The object of this Work is to give a candid, impartial, and connected account of the Principal Musical Performances, and their various Com-

posers, as well as of the most eminent Vocal and Instrumental Performers by whom they were introduced to the Public; blended with Remarks and Anecdotes, Musical, Histrionic, &c. As my ministration compels me occasionally to describe peculiarities and defects, I trust the reader will bear in mind that, as there are spots in that great and glorious luminary the Sun, it can scarcely be expected that *musicians* and *actors* should be *immaculate.*

INTRODUCTION.

As it may be gratifying to the reader to know the state music was in for several years antecedent to the account given in the following work, by way of introduction I propose giving a cursory sketch (as far as my memory furnishes) of musical occurrences from the time I first began to study the science, and came professionally before the public, to the year 1784, thereby embracing the period at which Garrick retired from the stage, which formed a new era in the art; for Mr. Linley, who succeeded Garrick as one of the joint patentees of Drury Lane Theatre, placed theatrical music on such an improved and judicious footing, as afterwards facilitated its further advancement through the genius of Shield and Storace.

At the age of ten years I began to study under a distinguished master, Mr. John Parke, my elder brother. My first attempt was on the German flute, and after a year had elapsed, a hautboy and reeds lying accidentally in my way, I took them up, and made my first untaught essay on that instrument by playing a popular dancing tune; so much to my satisfaction, that I felt an indescribable desire to learn that expressive instrument. My wish was shortly afterwards fully gratified by receiving regular instructions on it from my brother, one of the most eminent players of his time. In two years more I began to study the piano-forte, and had occasionally the valuable aid of Mr. Burney, pianist to Drury Lane Theatre, and nephew to the celebrated musical historian, Dr. Charles Burney, F.R.S. Amongst the publications I practised at that time were six sonatas, composed by Wolfang Mozart when only seven years old! My studies of the day were succeeded by evening attendances at Drury Lane Theatre, as a soprano chorus singer, at the time Garrick was its proprietor; and the first piece I assisted in was a new one written by that performer, produced in December 1775, intitled 'The Christmas Tale,' the pleasing music of which was produced by Charles Dibdin. This romance was got up with great splendour. The scenes were designed by the celebrated painter J. P. de Loutherburg, and

in it were first introduced his newly-invented transparent shades, so much admired afterwards in his popular exhibition called ‘ The Eidophusicon,’ which, by shedding on them a vast body and brilliancy of colour, produced an almost enchanting effect. Vernon, an excellent actor as well as singer, who played the hero of the opera, had in it the following lines as a recitative :—

By my shield and my sword ;
By the chaplet which circles my brow ;
By a knight's sacred word,
Whatever you ask,
How dreadful the task,
To perform before Heaven I vow.

Of this poetic *morceau* Garrick was very proud, and on Vernon giving it at the last rehearsal with great energy and effect, he was applauded by the other performers present as well as by the musicians in the orchestra. Garrick, who felt a portion of that vanity inseparable from authors, after receiving the compliments of those who surrounded him on the stage, came to the front of it, and addressing Stayner, the leader of the band, and Parke, the principal oboe player, said, “ What do you think of that ?” The answer being to his satisfaction, he proceeded to the end of the orchestra, where sat an eccentric young man, a violin player, (son of a deceased actor,) named

George Cross, to whom Garrick had been very kind. "Well, George," said Garrick, "what do you think of it?" Cross, who was with his back to the stage, popping up his head, replied, in his usual style, "Why, Mr. Garrick, I think its the best singing affidavit I ever heard." That Garrick was not pleased with this ebullition his countenance strongly evinced, and the marked coolness which he ever after displayed to the author of it proved that the said George Cross had not kept in mind the observation of Touchstone: "You'll ne'er be aware of your own wit till you break your shins against it."

This same George Cross was engaged, during a following summer, to play a violin in the orchestra of the Richmond Theatre; and repeatedly passing his leisure evenings amongst the respectable tradesmen of that town, one of them, a butcher, was so much pleased with his oddities, that he made him an offer of his horse for his Sunday excursions, which was accepted. On the morning Cross made his first equestrian jaunt: he had not rode more than five minutes when the animal suddenly turning from the road, ran up to the iron gate of a large mansion, where he stood so firmly fixed, that neither whip nor spur could remove him, till a countryman passing by, led him away. Cross, a little vexed, proceeded on his route; but

the quadruped shortly afterwards played him a similar trick. Perplexed now in the extreme, Cross made every exertion, in vain, to detach him from the gate; when, at length, a thought quickly flashing o'er his "mind's eye," he leaned forward, and applying his mouth to the ear of the beast, called out in a shrill and cook-like falsetto, "We don't want any thing to-day!" on which the horse turned into the road, and, at the rate of ten miles an hour, trotted back to his owner's door.

I continued practising at home, and singing in the choruses at Drury Lane Theatre till May, the end of the theatrical season of the year 1776, the period at which Garrick took leave of the public, in the presence of their Majesties, George the Third and his queen, in the character of Don Felix, in the comedy of 'The Wonder,' for the benefit of the Theatrical Fund; a plan which he had perfected. At the end of the play he spoke a short but pithy address, which appeared to be sensibly felt by the public as well as himself, and retired from the stage for ever, amidst loud and long-continued applause. Mr. Garrick, previous to his retirement, had sold his right in Drury Lane Theatre to Messrs. Sheridan, Linley, and Dr. Ford, for thirty-seven thousand pounds. I was engaged this summer as the tenor violin at Vauxhall Gardens, and in August of the same year was articled

to my brother. In the beginning of September I played the oboe at the grand musical festival at Worcester, called the triennial meeting of the three choirs of Worcester, Gloucester, and Hereford. At this meeting I first heard the popular violin-player Giardini execute a concerto, in which he displayed a fund of grace and expression, with a tone so sweet, and at the same time so powerful, that he appeared to me to be performing on strings so large, I really thought his fingers must have been blistered by the necessary pressure he gave them. In the middle of the same month, (September) when Drury Lane Theatre opened for the season, under its new proprietors, I was removed from the stage to the orchestra of that theatre, to play the tenor; an instrument which, owing to the admirable instruction of Mr. William Dance, I became qualified to perform on after rather more than three months' practice. The musical department of Drury Lane Theatre was now greatly improved under the direction of Mr. Linley, one of the proprietors, who produced, with great success, December 5, 1776, a new piece, in two acts, called 'Zelima and Azore,' translated from the French. The music was composed by Mr. Linley; and at its performance Mr. Linley, jun., led the band. This gentleman had lately returned from Italy, where

he had finished his studies under Tartini, the greatest master on the violin in Europe, to whom pupils from all parts were sent to complete their education.

A singular story respecting one of Tartini's most celebrated compositions is told on the authority of M. de Lande, chapel-master to Louis the Fourteenth: "One night, in the year 1713, he dreamt he had made a compact with the devil, and bound him to his service. In order to ascertain the musical abilities of his new associate, he gave him his violin, and desired him, as the first proof of his obedience, to play him a solo; which, to his great surprise, Satan executed with such surpassing sweetness, and in so masterly a manner, that, awaking in the ecstasy which it produced, he sprang out of bed, and instantly seizing his instrument, endeavoured to recall the delicious but fleeting sounds. Although not attended with the desired success, his efforts were yet so far effectual as to give rise to the piece since generally admired under the name of 'The Devil's Sonata.' Still the production was in his own estimation so inferior to that which he had heard in his sleep, as to cause him to declare that, could he have procured subsistence in any other line, he should have broken his violin in despair, and renounced music for ever!" No doubt his satanic majesty's

performance was, as we say in England, devilish good.

Mr. Linley, junior, though a very young man, was a highly finished performer on the violin, displaying most of the requisites which constitute a fine player. In 'Zelima and Azore,' Vernon, Dodd, the prince of fops of his day, Bannister, a fine rich and mellow bass voice, and the beautiful Mrs. Baddely, sustained the principal characters. The favourite song, 'No flower that blows,' charmingly sung by the latter, was, during the long run of the piece, rapturously encored. She also sang a bravura song, with a brilliant obligato violin accompaniment performed by Mr. Linley, junior, which excited the highest admiration and applause. Mr. Linley, junior, was a great favourite with the public; he led the band and played concertos on the violin at the oratorios at Drury Lane Theatre, commanded by their Majesties, in which performances his two sisters, Miss Linley (afterwards Mrs. Sheridan) and Miss M. Linley, sung with great *éclat*.

The success which had hitherto attended Drury Lane Theatre was owing chiefly to the excellence of its musical performances; but the production of Mr. Sheridan's unique comedy, 'The School for Scandal,' first performed on the 8th of May 1777, proved Thalia to be a powerful rival to Apollo.

This elegant play, so well known to the public, was received with such loud and unanimous applause, as excited both admiration and envy. Amongst those who cherished the latter feeling, no one was more conspicuous than Cumberland, the author of that admirable comedy 'The West Indian, who had during the preceding season brought out at the same theatre a new tragedy, well written, though heavy and bombastic. The day after the representation of 'The School for Scandal' a noble friend of Sheridan's called at his house to congratulate him on its success; and during the conversation observed that the whole phalanx of authors had been present, at the head of whom was Cumberland. "Pray," said Sheridan, "did Cumberland laugh at my comedy?"—"O no!" replied his friend, "he was uncommonly grave." —"That's very ungrateful on his part," rejoined Sheridan, "for I laughed all through his tragedy." It is remarkable that Mrs. Sheridan gave birth to a son on the morning of the day on which 'The School for Scandal' was produced. These events were thus neatly announced in one of the diurnal prints of the following day: "Yesterday morning Mrs. Sheridan was delivered of a son;—the mother and child are likely to do well; and in the evening of the same day Mr. Sheridan's muse was delivered of a bantling, which is likely to live for ever." This play acquired for

Mr. Sheridan the appellation of the modern Congreve; but in my opinion he has exceeded his great protoplast, because Sheridan's wit is equally brilliant, and is at the same time so chaste, that the most fastidious or refined female may admire it without a blush. The fourth act of this admirable comedy, which is not only the longest but the best, was at the time stated to have been written in one day; and the following fact, which came within my own knowledge, will in some measure confirm the truth of this rare instance of dramatic celerity: Mr. Sheridan, whilst writing 'The School for Scandal,' resided in Great Queen-street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, and it being intended to be brought out with great expedition, the under-prompter during the whole of that day was vibrating from the theatre to his house, and back again, like a pendulum; and, as Mahomet with the Alcoran, received it only by a sheet at a time, to enable the copyist to get on with the parts destined to the actors to study from.

During the time I performed on the tenor in the orchestra of Drury Lane Theatre I never lost sight of my favourite instrument the oboe: but as my time was occupied with rehearsals, &c. I had little opportunity for its cultivation, except by rising early in the morning: to effect which I hit on the following expedient: when I retired to rest at night I fastened a small cord to my arm,

which passing through the window of my sleeping-room, reached down to the iron railings of the kitchen area: this cord was, by my direction, pulled by the watchman at four o'clock in the morning, when I arose, and to prevent the family being disturbed, proceeded to the kitchen, where I practised until nine. This plan I pursued, winter and summer, for three years, without any instance of annoyance except the following: one fine summer morning, when, as an Irish friend said, "the nights are all days," some wags returning home from the tavern, "hot with the Tuscan grape," perceiving the cord dangling from the window of my dormitory within their reach, gave it two or three pulls with such violence, that had they been repeated with equal force might, before I could have disengaged the bracelet from my wrist, have forced me through the window to a quiet lodging on the *pavé*.

Mr. Linley produced his admired and well-known accompaniments to the original airs in the 'Beggar's Opera,' on the 8th of November of the same year (1777), several of which elicited strong marks of science and genius, particularly those to 'Cease your Funning,' and, 'O ponder well:' the elegant and effective oboe accompaniment to the former, finely played by the elder Parke, and the appropriate and impressive decorations to the latter by the French horns and clarionets, have

been justly eulogised by foreign writers, as well as by those of this country. Although music had at this period made a considerable advance under Mr. Linley, yet it exhibited as it were but a glimmering spark of the art, which being afterwards fanned into a flame by the genius of Shield and Storace, at length shone forth with that refulgence which subsequently illumined our theatrical hemisphere.

A camp having been formed at Coxheath, in the summer of the year 1778, attracted all ranks from the metropolis to view it. Mr. Sheridan, on the spur of the moment, wrote a musical piece in two acts, called 'The Camp,' produced at Drury Lane Theatre, on the 15th of October, 1778. This agreeable piece, which had an uncommon run, displayed a variety of military evolutions, very beautiful scenery designed by J. P. Loutherburg, and some pretty music composed by Mr. Linley. At one of the rehearsals Bannister, as Serjeant Drill, sung a song to the rustics to induce them to list, beginning,

> Great Cæsar, once renown'd in Fame,
> For a mighty arm and a laurel'd brow,
> With his Veni, vidi, vici, came,
> And conquer'd the world with his row dow dow.

The song ended: Bannister, as a further inducement, had to go through the manual exercise, giving the word himself, which he did in plain in-

telligible terms, thus: "Shoulder your arms!—Present your arms!" and was proceeding, when Sheridan, running up to him, exclaimed, "That won't do at all, Mr. Bannister; it is very unsoldier-like—you speak to be understood; they never do that on the parade."

During the following winter, 1779, an accident afforded to some of my friends an opportunity of proving whether my studies on the oboe had been attended to with diligence. Mr. Baumgarten, who occasionally gave music parties on Sunday evenings, at which his friends attended to hear his masterly compositions, owing to the indisposition of Mr. Mahon, the celebrated clarionet player, he was disappointed of his company, and therefore he requested me to play his part on the oboe. Although I had to play a very difficult part in a sestetto at sight, and to transpose it a note lower, I performed my task to the entire satisfaction of the composer and his visitors, amongst whom were Alderman Kirkman, (an amateur oboe player,) Sir Thomas Cave, Bart., Mr. Linley, Mr. Sheridan, &c. After supper the company were very entertaining, both ladies and gentlemen contributing to the hilarity of the party according to their respective abilities. Sir Thomas Cave, a country baronet, who I presume ranked as a musical amateur, performed a solo on a curiously carved and finely gilded salt-box; and though its tone was

not more sweet or varied than that produced by the shovel and brush of a May-day chimney-sweep, he nevertheless came off famously. This was succeeded by conundrums, some of which were amusing. At length Mr. Sheridan in his turn gave the following: "Why is a pig looking out of a garret window like a dish of green peas?" This coming from Sheridan excited great attention, every one setting their wits to work to discover the similitude, when, having racked their brains to no purpose for some time, they at length unanimously gave it up. "What!" said Sheridan, "can't any of you tell why a pig looking out of a garret window is like a dish of green peas?"—"No, no!" being the reply, he, enjoying the perplexity he had thrown them into, good-humouredly rejoined, "Faith, nor I neither."

I was introduced by my elder brother to the famous Parson Bate, who was then editor of the original Morning Post daily newspaper, and lodged in Buckingham-street, York Buildings. He was fond of music, played the violoncello, and had been well taught by Mr. Newby, the principal performer on that instrument at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane. During a Sunday evening, while I was visiting the parson and assisting in a little concert, Mr. Crotch of Norwich was introduced, together with his little boy, the present Dr. Crotch, professor of music in the University

of Oxford, for the purpose of the reverend gentleman and his musical friends hearing the latter play the piano-forte. The child, who appeared to be about three years old, displayed extraordinary genius for one of his tender age, and surprised and delighted all those who witnessed his efforts, although he laboured under the disadvantage of playing on a strange piano-forte instead of the organ his father, an ingenious carpenter, had built for him. When our music, consisting of quartettos, quintettos, &c., was ended, we sat down to supper, and the party consisting of none but Mr. Bate's particular friends, Mrs. Bate having carved one of a brace of partridges, gave it on a plate to Mr. Shield, the composer, who sat next to her, for the purpose of his assisting her by distributing it to the guests on his side of the table. Shield, who perhaps was thinking more of his 'Flitch of Bacon,' which opera had been produced at the little theatre in the Haymarket a few nights before, than the partridge, placed it before him, and, to the no small amusement of the company, after having observed that Mrs. Bate had helped him very plentifully, began to eat, and in due time cleared the plate; whilst the rest of the party were compelled to be content with the other bird, &c. Parson Bate was the author of the before-mentioned favourite musical piece, 'The Flitch of Bacon.' He was a man of

agreeable conversation, possessed a great portion of pride, and displayed such undaunted courage, as proved that he was more calculated to wield the sword than the crosier. The reverend gentleman being produced as a witness on a trial in the Court of King's Bench, the following dialogue took place between him and a counsellor who examined him: Counsellor. "What is your name?" Witness. "Bate."—C. "Arn't you called the fighting parson?"—W. "Perhaps I am."—C. "Perhaps won't do, sir—I ask you, if you are not called the fighting parson?"—W. "I told you so before; but if you doubt me, and will walk out of court, (clenching his fist,) I will give it you under my hand." This was sufficient for the counsellor, who put no further questions to his reverence.

In the summer of the year 1779 I was promoted at Vauxhall Gardens, from the tenor to be the principal second oboe, and by desire of the proprietor played occasionally some of the excellent pieces composed by Plas, for two oboes obligato, with my brother. The band was at that time led by Mr. Barthelemon, whose performance on the violin was greatly admired. About this time I was introduced to, and frequently visited, two brothers of the name of Buttall, who were very musical. At the house of these gentlemen I mixed with good company; amongst whom were several members of parliament and their ladies, and a

peer, who played whist well, and on a safe plan, receiving when he won, but never paying when he lost. Lord M——, who admired good living, and whose conversation was very animated, piqued himself on being an unrivalled eater of mustard, —an elegant accomplishment! One day during dinner, that stimulant being in use, he challenged any gentleman at table to enter the lists with him, which being accepted by my brother, they swallowed a large silver mustard ladle-full each; during which exploit they displayed such contortions of countenance as greatly resembled two rustics at a country fair, grinning for a gold-laced hat, and afforded a rare specimen of demi-strangulation!

In the early part of this year, 1779, Garrick died, and shortly afterwards Mr. Sheridan, the principal proprietor of Drury Lane, produced his beautiful monody on the death of that great actor. This poem was partly set to music by Mr. Linley; and it was performed with great applause for many nights between the play and farce. It was forcibly recited by Mrs. Yates, the great tragic actress of that day; and some of the verses were responded by the principal vocalists, accompanied by the band, who occupied an orchestra built on the stage, as at the oratorios. The whole of the performers being requested to appear in black clothes, it was intimated, that any lady or gentleman who required it, should be furnished at

the wardrobe of the theatre. The run on the wardrobe therefore was such, that one of the musicians, a bassoon player, applying rather late, there was not a black coat left, except one of a very ancient cut, which, from the fashion of it, appeared as if it had been made in the year one. This the bassoon player rejecting, the wardrobe-keeper said to him, "Why, sir, there are many who would be proud of wearing what you refuse:—this coat was worn by Shakspeare." Notwithstanding this powerful recommendation, the bassoon player was still averse to putting it on, till hearing the call-boy vociferate up the staircase, "ready to begin," he hurried into it, and departed immediately. When the bassoon player appeared in the orchestra with his instrument, (jocosely called a horse's leg,) in the coat of the immortal bard, in the skirts and sleeves of which there was no lack of cloth, the singularity of his costume excited the risibility of the performers to that degree, particularly the vocalists, that they could scarcely get through their parts with that decency which the solemnity of the scene required; in consequence of which Mr. Sheridan, who laughed immoderately, gave Shakspeare's risible coat a holiday, by ordering a modern one to be made for the man of wind!

Though I continued playing the tenor in the winter season at Drury Lane Theatre, at the same

time I embraced every occasion of hearing good music; and having the privilege of attending the rehearsals at the Opera House, I frequently had opportunities of listening to those great singers, Madame Le Brun, in 1780, and Signora Allegranti in the following year, 1781. The forte of Madame Le Brun was bravura singing, in which she executed the most difficult divisions with ease and brilliancy; and her voice was of such extraordinary compass, that she sung up to G in alt, perfectly in tune. Being married to Monsieur Le Brun, an oboe player of talent, (though he occasionally played out of tune,) their united ability was called forth by the circumstance of Sacchini composing songs for Madame Le Brun, with obligato accompaniments for her husband on the oboe. Signora Allegranti, who first appeared at the King's Theatre in 1781, possessed a rich, clear, and powerful soprano voice, of extensive compass, blended with exquisite taste and expression. She was a great favourite with the English public, who bestowed on her universal applause. This charming singer, who exhibited no shake, made her closes with so much elegance and effect, that the most fastidious did not regret the absence of that hitherto essential ornament in singing. What then was not the surprise of the frequenters of the Italian Opera when, at her benefit at the latter end of the season, she, for the first time, displayed in her cadences,

&c., a shake the most liquid, brilliant, and perfect imaginable! This beautiful ornament she had probably kept in reserve, relying on her other powerful requisites, in order to afford her admirers an agreeable surprise on that occasion.

Mrs. Siddons, who had been performing in tragedy with great eclat at the Bath Theatre, made her first appearance, since the year 1776, at Drury Lane Theatre, on the 10th of October, 1782, in the character of Isabella, in the play of that name. The effect that lady produced was astonishing, and the impression she made was such, that the houses were crowded every night she performed. Sheridan, the proprietor of the theatre, who knew better than most persons the art of puffing, contrived to make it fashionable for persons of distinguished rank and talent of both sexes to witness her performances in the orchestra, thereby attracting the gaze and exciting the observations of the public. Amongst those who frequently appeared in that part of the house were Charles James Fox, Counsellor (afterwards lord) Erskine, Lord Holland, and the great painter, Sir Joshua Reynolds. The latter perhaps formed an exception to the preceding observation, he selecting that situation, not from coxcombry, but for convenience, being so extremely deaf, that it was necessary he should be near the actors, and to sit with what is commonly termed an ear-trumpet, one end of which

was placed in his ear to convey the sounds to it. On one occasion, when Sir Joshua was present, a loquacious young sailor of a respectable cast, who had got a country youth in tow, sitting in the pit next to the orchestra, was showing off, as he imagined, between the acts, by explaining to his companion the names, not too correctly, of the different instruments played on by the band. At length coming to Sir Joshua, who was sitting at the further part of the orchestra, as before described, he, in answer to the interrogatory of his mate—" what instrument is that?" replied with great confidence, " O, that's a newly invented trumpet blown by the ear!" Amidst the blaze of popularity in which Mrs. Siddons now moved, she had the prudence to avoid the error common to those of her profession, by seizing every opportunity which presented itself of disposing of her property to the best advantage, as the following anecdote will show:—Brereton, then a rising and a favourite actor, who was in the habit of performing several of the principal characters with Mrs. Siddons at Drury Lane Theatre, being one morning in the shop of his cheesemonger, observed an uncommonly fine ham, which, after having examined and made a private mark on it, to prevent it being exchanged, he ordered to be sent to his house, from whence he despatched it as a present to Mrs. Siddons. A few days afterwards

Brereton, wanting a similar article for his own table, called on the same tradesman to procure one, when, to his great surprise, he was shown the identical ham which he had presented to the Melpomene of the day, with his own private mark unobliterated; and on inquiry learned, that the lady, who dealt at the same shop, had sent it thither, being desirous of taking the value of it out in the more humble domestic articles of butter and cheese! If the alchymists of former days, who had wasted so much time in search of the philosopher's stone, had lived then, they might from the lady's example have discovered perhaps that transmutation can only be effected with certainty by the fusion of industry and frugality in the crucible of perseverance, whereby pence may become silver, and silver become gold.

Some time after this occurrence Mrs. Siddons' little boy, about seven years old, afterwards Mr. H. Siddons, who performed the child with his mother in 'Isabella,' being in the green-room one evening when that play was acted, said in an artless manner to Brereton, who had taken great notice of him, "My uncle's coming here soon."— "Is he, my pretty little fellow?" said Brereton.— "Yes," added the child, "and he is to take all your parts!" This proves how necessary it is for persons to be careful of what they say in the presence of their children or servants, neither of

whom are remarkable for keeping a secret. As the boy predicted, however, notwithstanding the present of the ham, Mr. John Kemble did come to Drury Lane Theatre, and took from Brereton the whole of his principal characters. Poor Brereton, some time afterwards went mad, in which state he died, and John Kemble subsequently married his widow! Brereton, who was a very gentlemanly man, was brother to the well-known fighting Major Brereton, who passed much of his time at Bath. When I was in Ireland, in the year 1796, I learned that the major, who was the terror of society, being in a coffee-house in Dublin, and having a dispute with an English naval officer, they proceeded to its adjustment by an appeal to arms, when, after a pass or two with their swords, the sailor terminated the contest, by nearly severing the major's head from his body!

In the year 1775, while I was a boy, having had an accident with my best sky-blue *inexpressibles*, I was despatched to old Forest, the family tailor, living in a small house in Martlet-court, Bow-street, Covent Garden, to have them repaired. Having knocked at his door two or three times, it was at length opened by a female (the tailor being from home) with an infant in her arms. The lady, who displayed a fine figure and an expressive countenance, inclining to melancholy, kindly took in my message and my inex-

pressibles. Judge then of my surprise when a few years afterwards (in 1782) I discovered that the lady who had previously favoured me was the theatrical star, " the grace and ornament" of the British stage, Mrs. Siddons ! who had formerly lodged in the tailor's little first floor. Mrs. Siddons, who had been engaged by Garrick (then manager of Drury Lane Theatre) for the season, made her first appearance on the London boards in the character of Portia, in Shakspeare's play ' The Merchant of Venice,' which she performed respectably ; but in it did not elicit any very extraordinary talent. She afterwards played the part of Emily, in a new comedy written by Mrs. Cowley, called ' The Runaway,' in which she made little impression on the public, although the play had a long run. This was before her powers were completely developed. It has notwithstanding been unjustly stated, by more writers than one, that Garrick had discovered the rare genius of Mrs. Siddons, and that he, from jealousy, fearing to come into collision with her, did not engage her for the following season. In refutation of this silly assertion, nothing more need be advanced than that, as Garrick retired from the stage at the end of the season, in the spring of 1776, after having sold his interest in Drury Lane Theatre to Mr. Sheridan, Dr. Ford, and Mr. Linley, her not being re-engaged must have proceeded from

the want of judgment, perhaps, of the three before-mentioned gentlemen, who succeeded him as joint patentees of the theatre. It has also been said that Garrick, to enhance his own professional reputation, at all times took care to have indifferent performers in the characters immediately connected with those he performed, to serve as foils to increase his own brilliancy. This charge carried with it some appearance of truth, from such actors as the placid Packer, the asthmatic Hurst, and the sullen Bransby, playing so frequently with him. It should, however, at the same time be considered, that where the parts could be conveniently cast for performers of superior ability, he did not display any reluctance to perform with those favourite actors, Smith, King, Dodd, Parsons, &c.; and, although King Lear was a great part of his, he had no aversion to Reddish personating the character of Edgar (mad Tom), notwithstanding the latter elicited such sparks of genius as occasioned the applause to be equally divided between them That Garrick was in every sense of the word a great actor, "a man who plays many parts," has been universally acknowledged, he being alike excelent in genteel and low comedy as in tragedy It must, however, be allowed, that we have subsequently had several capital performers of both sexes, moving in particular and *confined* spheres,

like the side scenes in a groove :—this not soaring beyond a shout and a laugh,—that a start and a tear. The versatility and excellence of Garrick, therefore, having placed him pre-eminently above all his compeers, it will not be denied that he was entitled to that distinguishing appellation so justly conferred on him by an enlightened public, "The English Roscius!" I have been led into these observations from having been a witness of what I have attempted to illustrate, and will conclude in the words of our immortal bard,

—— take him for all in all,
We shall not look upon his like again.

In the early part of the winter 1782 I accompanied some friends, who were intimately acquainted with the celebrated Dr. Solander, to the British Museum. Dr. Solander, who had made a voyage round the world with our great circumnavigator, Captain Cook, amongst other curiosities which the museum abounds with, showed us several brought from Otaheite, particularly one of the flutes used by the natives. This musical instrument was a perforated cane, and was blown by them through the nose! If I had felt inclined to doubt the fact, I should have been convinced of my error by the doctor playing an Otaheitean air on it in the manner described. The air had a wildness and simplicity of character which was pleasing, and may be found in a work of mine, with an explanatory note attached to it, published

by Clementi and Co., called 'The Musical Cosmography.'

Shortly after the commencement of the theatrical season of 1783 the situation of principal oboe in the orchestra of Covent Garden Theatre becoming vacant by the resignation of Mr. Sharp, an excellent performer on that instrument, through the recommendation of Mr. Shield, the composer and musical director there, I was engaged by Mr. Harris the proprietor of it. I first took my seat in the early part of November 1783, between which time and Christmas no musical piece was produced, except one of O'Keef's in two acts, (composed by Shield) intitled 'The Poor Soldier,' in which that inimitable comic singing actor, Edwin, delighted the laughter-loving part of the audience with his unrivalled performance in the character of Darby. In this piece, which became popular, Mrs. Kennedy, who possessed one of the finest counter-tenor voices ever heard, performed the character of Patrick, the Poor Soldier, and sang the songs admirably. This lady became the pupil of Dr. Arne, under the following curious circumstances: Some performers of Covent Garden Theatre, frequenting a public-house in the neighbourhood of St. Giles's, were much struck with the voice of a young Irish woman who waited on the parlour guests, and who, on being requested, obliged them with a song. These persons having described to Dr. Arne the fine

quality of her voice, he went with them to hear her, and was so much pleased with its clear and sweet tones, that he took her under his tuition; and, after a proper time had elapsed in cultivating her talent, introduced her to Mr. Harris, the proprietor of Covent Garden Theatre, who engaged her. The only difficulty which presented itself against bringing her out on the stage proceeded from the plainness of her face, for she was by no means a Venus, and the badness of her figure, which displayed little of that symmetry so much admired in the graces. It was, however, at length agreed, that if she would not be very prepossessing in female, she might appear to advantage in male attire, and therefore she made her first appearance, in the year 1777, in the character of Captain Macheath in 'The Beggar's Opera,' in which she introduced Dr. Arne's celebrated hunting song, composed for the occasion, 'A hunting we will go.' Notwithstanding the disadvantages of person with which she had to contend, her fine voice had almost the effect of fascinating the audience, who bestowed on her songs in general high approbation, and on her hunting song an universal encore. This lady, afterwards married to Dr. Kennedy, M.D., became a great support to the vocal department of Vauxhall Gardens as well as of Covent Garden Theatre, and continued to be a great favourite with the public for many years.

MUSICAL MEMOIRS.

1784.

THE Italian opera this season again possessed a host of strength in Pacchierotti, who first appeared at the King's Theatre in the year 1778, and, notwithstanding this was his seventh season, his voice (a *soprano*) was as much admired as ever, and he was still considered a most accomplished singer, though I have frequently heard him hold a note for two or three bars below the pitch, and be enthusiastically applauded for it. This might have proceeded from the Italian system of tuition, which so strictly forbids pupils singing too sharp, that it may perhaps occasion them to fall into the opposite defect of singing too flat. It appears to me, however, to be a hopeless task to attempt teaching persons to sing in tune whose auricular nerves are not perfectly organised. Pacchierotti,

was greatly admired for his vast feeling and expression, which he evinced by a peculiar mode of shrugging his shoulders, and nodding his head according to the passage. As a singer, Pacchierotti was the greatest favourite with the ladies since Farinelli, particularly with L—y M—y D—n, (as old as a sibyl, and as ugly as Sicorax,) whose impenetrable features nothing could relax, save the Signor's fascinating song! Pacchierotti made his first appearance of the season, January 2nd, in a new serious opera, called, 'Il Trionso d'Arania,' the music of which was by Anfossi. Pacchierotti sang with great effect and applause, and in his second and last airs displayed the utmost taste and pathos. Signora Lusini, though by no means his equal, sang with much feeling. Two performers, Signora Dorta, and Signor Tasca, appeared for the first time, on the 6th of January, in a new comic opera, called, 'I Rivali delusi,' the music of which was by Sarti. They both acted and sang with great animation, and were well received. Tasca's fine mellow bass voice was very striking. The fine serious opera, 'Demofonte,' the music by Bertoni, was performed for Pacchierotti's benefit on the 6th of March, to a crowded house. Pacchierotti in the airs 'Non temer,' and Handel's 'Verdi prati,' sang with extraordinary energy and expression, and was rapturously applauded. The performance of Sig-

nora Lusini and Signor Tasca were highly effective. Bertoni, who accompanied Pacchierotti to England, set the opera of the ‘ Orazi e Curiazi,’ in 1746, for the theatre San Casiano at Venice, where he was *maestro* of the *conservatorio*. He composed operas also for most of the theatres in Italy, particularly that of Turin. His opera of ‘ Quinto Fabio,’ which was greatly admired in London, was originally produced at Padua, where it was performed twenty consecutive nights with great applause. Bertoni, as a composer, though he did not reach the sublime, was often pleasing and occasionally happy. The opera company was this season in some respects defective.

The grand concerts in Hanover Square, under the direction of a committee of amateurs, commenced on the 11th of February ; Signor Franchi and Signora Lusini were the singers. Cramer, Clementi, and Schwarts, played concertos in the first style of excellence, on the violin, piano-forte, and bassoon. These concerts had emerged out of Bach’s and Abel’s concerts, which were first established about the year 1763, and continued to flourish for twenty years.

Oratorios were performed at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, on the Wednesdays and Fridays during the Lent season, and on the latter days were honoured by the presence of their Majesties. They were alternately conducted by Mr. Stanley

and Mr. Linley. The principal singers were, Mr. Norris, (from Oxford,) Mr. Reinhold, Miss George, and Mrs. Kennedy. Mr. Richards led the band, and Messrs. Crosdill, Mahon, and the elder Parke, exerted their superior abilities in concertos on the violoncello, clarionet, and oboe. A curious circumstance occurred on the first night of this season. Their Majesties had commanded Handel's sacred oratorio 'The Messiah;' and from there not being any concertos between the acts, the performance unexpectedly ended at half-past nine o'clock, which never having happened before, the royal carriages had not arrived to convey the King and Queen home. His Majesty had arisen from his chair to take leave of the public, according to custom, when the lord chamberlain informed him of the circumstance. The King looked at his watch, and with the utmost good humour communicated the singular occurrence to the Queen. However, about a minute afterwards, being informed that his coach was ready, his Majesty smiling, made his usual bow, and retired amidst the acclamations of the audience.

The Pantheon concerts commenced on the 29th of March, in which Madame Mara made her first appearance in England. Her sweet and powerful voice, her brilliant execution, and refined taste, surprised and delighted all who heard her, and

the applause she received was immense. Salomon led the band, and Crosdill and Fischer played concertos on the violoncello and oboe, with the utmost taste and effect.

On the 17th of the same month a new comic opera, called, 'Robin Hood,' written by Mr. M'Nally, a counsellor of the sister kingdom, was brought out at Covent Garden Theatre. The music to this opera, with the exception of a few pieces, was composed by Mr. Shield, and was, together with the rest, eminently successful. Among the most favourite pieces were Mrs. Bannister's song, 'The Nightingale,' in which I performed a brilliant accompaniment on the oboe. Mr. Bannister's fine bass song, 'As burns the Charger,' accompanied by Mr. Sarjant on the trumpet; and the duet, 'The Stag through the forest,' to the music of Doctor Harrington's 'How sweet in the woodlands,' which was sung by Johnstone and Bannister, and was unanimously encored. It is a curious fact, that Mr. Bannister, who never sang out of time or out of tune, did not know one note of music. He had his songs, &c. paroted to him by a worthy friend of mine, Mr. Griffith Jones, who was at that time pianist to Covent Garden Theatre. The music in this opera was looked upon as the chef-d'œuvre of Mr. Shield. The fine overture, which was obli-

gato for the oboe, was composed by Mr. Baumgarten, and was universally applauded.

Although I now felt very comfortable in my situation, being honoured with the approbation of the public, possessing the friendship of Mr. Shield, who wrote for my instrument, and of Mr. Baumgarten, a great contrapuntist, under whom I studied composition, I did not consider the *fish yet caught*, my ambition prompting me to endeavour to attain the still higher walks of concerts and concerto playing; to effect which I embraced every opportunity afforded me for practice and study; and as *every little helps*, I had a party of talented friends every Sunday morning to breakfast with me, after which we played quartets and quintets for three or four hours. My party generally consisted of Mr. Shield, Mr. Dance, Mr. Blake, myself, and Counsellor Howarth, M.P., one of the most distinguished lawyers at the English bar. He was also a man of agreeable manners and witty conversation, and was not only a lover of music, but an excellent performer on the tenor. The last time I met Mr. Howarth was at an evening party, in the house of Mr. Mayor, ex-member for Abingdon, whom Mr. Howarth had lately succeeded as representative of that borough in parliament. During supper Mr. Howarth invited me to dine with him the follow-

ing Sunday at his country-house at Mortlake, near Richmond, which, fortunately for me, I declined, as on that day, while he and his brother-in-law, Mr. Chippenden (attended by Mr. Howarth's coachman), were sailing on the Thames, the boat upset, and Mr. Howarth, though an excellent swimmer, was drowned opposite to his own dwelling, and in sight of his family. The courts of Westminster, in compliment to his talent and worth, were closed during the following day. As it may appear extraordinary that Mr. Howarth, who was an expert swimmer, should be drowned, whilst Mr. Chippenden and the coachman (neither of whom could swim) were saved, it is necessary to state the supposed cause of that melancholy catastrophe. So soon as the surprise occasioned by the boat upsetting had subsided, Mr. Howarth hastened to save his brother-in-law, and holding him up with one hand, swam with the other to the boat, where, having placed him in safety, whilst several watermen were coming to their assistance, he was about to proceed to the aid of his servant, but, on quitting hold of his relative, he instantly went down like a shot. The coachman was however picked up. It was conjectured that Mr. Howarth had, through excessive exertion, ruptured a blood vessel in the head ; but

as his body was not found for many days afterwards, that fact could not be satisfactorily ascertained.

Instrumental music had at this period arrived at a high degree of perfection, being graced with the shining talents of the following solo players: Giardini, Cramer, Salomon, Pieltain, and Barthelemon, on the violin; Crosdill and Cervetto on the violoncello; Fischer and the elder Parke on the oboe; Clementi, Schroeter, and Dance, on the piano-forte; Florio and Graeff on the flute; Schwarts and Holmes on the bassoon; Abel on the viol di gamba; Mahon on the clarionet; Sarjant on the trumpet; and Stamstz and Shield on the tenor.

Vauxhall Gardens (then highly fashionable) opened on the 20th of May. The singers were Mrs. Weichsell, (mother of Mrs. Billington,) Mrs. Wrighton, and Mrs. Kennedy, (an excellent trio,) and Mr. Arrowsmith. Mr. Pieltain led the band, and played concertos on the violin; and the elder Parke and Hook performed concertos on the oboe and organ.

This year a grand commemoration of Handel took place, by command of their Majesties, in Westminster Abbey. The following brief account of it, partly derived from my own reminiscences (having been engaged in it,) and partly from Dr.

Burney's book on the subject, will probably be gratifying to the lovers of music. The first performance, a selection of sacred music from the works of Handel, was on Wednesday the 26th of May. The Abbey was arranged for the accommodation of the public, after the plan of Mr. Wyatt, the King's architect, in a superb and very convenient manner. The orchestra, which contained upwards of five hundred performers, was formed in a rising manner in tiers, beginning about eight feet from the floor, and increasing gradually till it reached the centre of the large painted window at the west entrance, the performers looking eastward. The splendid box erected for their Majesties, with others on each side for their suite, the bishops, and noble directors, crossed the aisle of the cathedral opposite to the orchestra, close to the entrance of the choir. The area between the royal box and the orchestra was very spacious, and was fitted up with seats covered with crimson cloth, extending from one side to the other, and galleries were ingeniously built along each side, elevated about ten feet from the floor. The admissions were one guinea each ; and the curiosity of the public was so great, that although the performance was not to commence till twelve o'clock, the doors were besieged by nine. Their Majesties, preceded by the noble directors in full court dresses, with the medal of Handel struck for the

occasion, suspended by white satin rosettes to their breasts, and white staves in their hands, entered their box at twelve o'clock precisely; and when they were seated the performance opened with the coronation anthem, composed in 1727 for the coronation of George II., which was followed by the overture to Esther, composed in 1720. The four bars solo, in the second movement for the oboe, was played by Mr. Vincent, and the brilliant solos for the same instrument in the allegro, (says Dr. Burney,) "were played by twelve oboes in unison, which united in such a manner as to have the effect of only one."—"Of the Dettingen Te Deum, for the peace of Utrecht, (observes the same writer,) which was produced in 1743, and which succeeded the former, I shall only observe, that as it was composed for a military triumph, the fourteen trumpets, two pair of common kettle drums, two pair of double drums from the Tower, and a pair of *double bass* drums, made expressly for this commemoration,—(I beg to add that they were invented, manufactured, and beat by Mr. John Asbridge, kettle-drummer to Drury Lane Theatre, at his own expense,)—were introduced with great propriety. Indeed the last-mentioned drums, except in their destruction, had all the effect of the most powerful artillery." The overture and dead march in Saul, and the 'Gloria Patri,' from the Jubilate, com-

posed in 1713, were next given, and received every possible advantage from such a correct and numerous band. When this great event was in contemplation, two very pompous gentlemen, Dr. Hayes of Oxford, and Dr. Miller of Doncaster, came to town to give their gratuitous assistance as conductors, by beating time. After several meetings and some bickerings, it was at length agreed that Dr. Hayes (Mus. Dr. Oxon) should conduct the first act and Dr. Miller the second. With regard to the third, I suppose they were to toss up for it. When the time of performance had arrived, and Mr. Cramer, the leader, had just tapt his bow, (the signal for being ready,) and looked round to catch the eyes of the performers, he saw, to his astonishment, a tall gigantic figure, with an immense powdered toupee, full dressed, with a bag and sword, and a huge roll of parchment in his hand.

> ——— The son of Hercules he justly scorn'd
> By his broad shoulders and gigantic mien.

"Who is that gentleman?" said Mr. Cramer. —"Dr. Hayes," was the reply.—"What is he going to do?"—"To beat time."—"Be so kind," said Mr. Cramer, "to tell the gentleman that when he has sat down I will begin." The Doctor, who never anticipated such a *set down* as this, took his seat, and Mr. Cramer did begin, and his

Majesty and all present bore witness to his masterly style of leading the band.

The second performance was at the Pantheon, on the evening of Thursday, May 27. It commenced with Handel's fourth concerto. Mr. Harrison gave the air from 'Sosarmes,' composed in 1732, 'May heaven in pity,' with the utmost chasteness and truth. Signor Pacchierotti sang the air, 'The wily sportsman,' from 'Julius Cæsar,' composed in 1743, in which he produced the greatest effect. Madame Mara, in the air in 'Atalanta,' composed in 1736, 'While I retire,' by the beautiful sweetness and power of her voice, delighted every hearer. The third performance, 'The Messiah,' was in the Abbey, May 29. The church was this day crowded to excess with elegant company. Their Majesties (who, as before, wore the medal of Handel) entered exactly at twelve o'clock. In the opening of 'The Messiah,' the recitative 'Comfort ye my people,' and the air which follows, 'Every valley shall be exalted,' Mr. Harrison delivered with his superior ability. Madame Mara, in the air 'Rejoice,' displayed the utmost brilliancy of execution; and in 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' her expression and pathos were so powerful, that there were but few eyes that were not moistened with a tear. The favourite bass trumpet

song, 'The trumpet shall sound,' was uncommonly well sung by Signor Tasca, and was finely accompanied on the trumpet by Mr. Sarjant. The imperfect note on the fourth of the key on the trumpet has since been rendered perfect by Mr. Hydes' ingenious invention of a slide. "But now I hasten," says Dr. Burney, "to speak of the 'hallelujah chorus,' which is the triumph of Handel, the commemoration, and of the musical art. Now, as the orchestra in Westminster Abbey seemed to ascend to the clouds, and unite with the saints and martyrs represented on the painted glass in the west window, which had all the appearance of a continuation of the orchestra, I could hardly refrain from imagining that this orchestra was a point or segment of the celestial circles: and perhaps no band of mortal musicians ever exhibited a more imposing appearance to the eye or afforded more ecstatic and affecting sounds to the ear than this.

> So sung they, and the empyrean rung
> With hallelujahs."

These performances gave such general satisfaction, that his Majesty consented to honour with his presence two additional ones, which took place on Thursday, June 3, consisting of a grand selection, and on Saturday, June 5, of 'The

Messiah.' At the rehearsal of these two extra performances Mr. Bates, the director of them, received a letter from Mr. Reinhold, the principal bass singer, stating that he was so hoarse he should not be able to attend. This caused some delay, and it being buzzed about the orchestra, at length reached the ears of old Bellamy, one of the chorus singers, whose ambition prompted him to make an offer of his services to Mr. Bates in the following words :—" Mr. Bates,—Sir, as Mr. Reinhold can't sing, if you please I will stand in his shoes." To which Mr. Bates replied, " Mr. Bellamy,— Sir, we will not trouble you, as Mr. Reinhold's shoes won't fit you." This disappointment was, however, soon got over, by Mr. Bellamy, jun. singing the part. " Of these extra performances," says Dr. Burney, " nothing more need be said, than that they were executed with such correctness and grandeur of effect as entitled them to still greater praise than the foregoing." At these musical performances Mr. Ashley, a sub-director, and first bassoon at Covent Garden Theatre, played for the first time on a newly-invented instrument called a double bassoon, an appropriate appellation, it being double the size of the common ones. This instrument, which rested on a stand, had a sort of flue affixed to the top of it, similar (with the exception of smoke) to

that of a Richmond steam-boat. I am ignorant, however, whether it produced any tone, or whether it was placed in the orchestra to terminate the prospect. The name of this double *bass* and gigantic instrument, which was only fit to be grasped by the monster Polyphemus, did not transpire, and the double bassoon, which had never been *heard*, was never again *seen* after these performances were ended! The profits arising from these performances, as well as the former ones, were applied to charitable purposes. The official statement of the sum received at the five commemoration performances was 12,736*l.* 12*s.* 10*d.* The disbursements, among which were 6,000*l.* to the society for decayed musicians, (the members of which attended the rehearsals and performances gratis,) and 1000*l.* to the Westminster Hospital, amounted to the same sum, with the exception of 236*l.* 6*s.* 6*d.*, left in the hands of Mr. Redmond Simpson, sub-treasurer, to answer subsequent demands. That gentleman, as a performer on the oboe, was highly estimated before Fischer arrived in England. He was musical librarian to the Queen, and many years principal oboist to the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, and when he retired he was succeeded by Mr. Sharp, my predecessor. At his funeral, in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, I attended with other wind instrument players who respected him,

and we assisted in the performance of the ' Dead March in Saul' over his grave.

The public were so highly gratified with the Abbey performances, that the proprietors of Drury Lane Theatre, perceiving that music was the order of the day, produced, on the 5th of November a new comic opera in two acts, intitled ' The Spanish Rivals;' the music of which was composed by Mr. Linley. This composition was very effective: the song in it, ' Let the lark find repose,' is a delightful piece, and was twice sweetly sung by Miss Phillips, afterwards Mrs. Crouch. The manager of Covent Garden Theatre, not to be behindhand, presented, on the 16th of November, a new comic opera in three acts, with extraordinary success, intitled ' Fontainbleau; or, Our way in France.' The dramatic part of the piece was written by O'Keefe. The music was compiled and composed by Mr. Shield. Among the prominent pieces are ' Let Fame sound the trumpet,' an original and beautiful composition, well sung by Johnstone; Edwin's comic song ' In London my life is a ring of delight,' the *ne plus ultra* of comic singing, and Miss Wheeler's bravura, accompanied by me on the oboe, which was (says a critic) a scientific and brilliant display of vocal and instrumental excellence. On this song Peter Pindar wrote the following lines. They first appeared in

the ' Morning Herald,' of December, 1784, and are now to be found amongst his fugitive pieces:

To thee, while others pour their praise,
The bard delighted joins the throng;
With pride he tunes, though weak his lays,
Where merit justifies the song.

Yet think not Parke thy wond'rous skill
Fair praise alone from mortals draws:
Lo! Phœbus listens from his hill,
And all the Muses join th' applause.

A few days after this highly successful opera was produced Mr. Shield gave a dinner party at his house in compliment to those friends who had performed the principal parts in it, among whom were Edwin, Johnstone, Bannister, myself, Mr. Fozard, &c. Such a combination of talent could not but prove entertaining, as each one contributed after dinner to the hilarity of the meeting. Mr. Fozard (the fashionable horse-dealer of Park Lane) described a new species of robbery which had been committed on his premises during the preceding night. It appeared some villains had broken into his stables, and cut off the tails of a string of valuable young horses just received from the breeder. "This circumstance," said he, addressing his friend Bannister, "has distressed me very much, for I am quite at a loss how to sell

them. What would you advise ?"—" Why," said Bannister, in his peculiar way, " in my opinion, the best thing you can do is to sell them by *wholesale*, for you'll never be able to *re-tail* them." Edwin gave some of his comic songs inimitably, particularly ' Amo, Amas,' from ' The Agreeable Surprise,' and ' Four-and-twenty Fidlers all on a row ;' and Johnstone some of his Irish airs, and duets with Bannister. Shield, who was so good an actor, that Edwin, at the rehearsal of a new opera, would never go through his songs till he had heard him sing them, related with great ability the following whimsical anecdote of an actor of the name of Digges, who had performed the principal characters at Colman's Theatre in the Hay Market during the preceding summer. This man, (a tragedian,) who had obtained the appellation of the great northern actor, and who was as frigid as the vicinity of the north pole, having had his benefit fixed, began to consider what attractive novelty he should produce to fill the house on that occasion, and at length determined to select ' The Beggar's Opera,' and to perform the character of Macheath in it himself. Digges, who had never before attempted a song, sent for his old friend Shield to ask his advice, and to request him to hear him sing one of the songs, which, on his arrival, in strict accordance with Hamlet's advice

to the players, " Suit the action to the word," he rehearsed in the following manner :

AIR.

When the *heart* [striking his left breast with his right hand] of a man is depress'd with care,
The *mist* [drawing his hands across his eyes] is dispell'd when a woman appears ;
Like the notes of a *fiddle* [imitating the action of playing one] she sweetly, sweetly
Raises his spirits and charms his *ear.* [Seizing his left *lug* with the thumb and finger of his right hand.]

Digges proceeded no further, for the lengthened countenance of his friend Shield deterred him; nor did he subsequently appear in the character of Macheath, whereby he not only evinced much prudence, but probably avoided a similar fate to that intended for Mr. D——n, an unpopular actor in Dublin, who being announced in the play bills to perform the character of Richard the Third, was luckily prevented from appearing by sudden illness. On this disappointment being communicated to the audience by the manager, from the stage, a gentleman sprung upon the seats of the pit, and addressing the public, said, with a stentorian voice, " Jontlemen ! as Mr. D——n don't act to-night, you may *ate* your apples."

The King's Theatre opened for the season, the 18th of December, with a comic opera, called ' Il Curioso Indiscreto ;' the music by Anfossi, in

which Signor Cremonini appeared for the first time: his talent was not very splendid. The music of this opera is not one of Anfossi's best efforts; nevertheless there are in it some pretty airs, and the *finales* are various and original.

1785.

The 'Ode for the New Year' was composed by Mr. Stanley, master of the King's band, and composer of the odes, as well as the minuets danced at court on their Majesties' birth-days. After these places became vacant by the death of Dr. Boyce, in 1779, Fischer the oboe player, who was one of the Queen's band, posted off to Windsor to solicit the King to appoint him composer of the minuets. When he arrived there he found his Majesty had gone to the stables. Fischer followed him, and, in his odd sputtering way, thus preferred his suit:—"Please your Majesty, I can write minuets."—"Can you?" said the King, "then you may go and play them." His Majesty had previously appointed Mr. Stanley to both places.

The manager of the King's Theatre, who felt the loss of Pacchierotti, and who had made every endeavour to obtain efficient performers, presented to the public, on the 21st of January, the serious opera of 'Demetrio,' in which Signor Crescentini and Signora Ferrerese made their first appearance.

The singing and acting of Crescentini, though by no means equal to Pacchierotti's, was at all times neat, and often brilliant. Ferrerese had a sweet voice, and sang with taste, but she was not calculated to shine as a *prima donna*. They were both much applauded. Cherubini, who selected and composed this opera, was a scholar of Sarti: he was a young man of genius; and the overture, and the duet in the third act, gave promise of future greatness. Cramer led the band. The comic opera was considerably aided by the appearance of Signor Franchi, on the 24th of January, in 'Il Pittore Parigiano.' Franchi's voice was clear and powerful, and he sang with great taste. The manager, being desirous of strengthening the serious opera, engaged Signor Tenducci, who had been singing with success at the Hanover Square concerts: he appeared on the 11th of May in Sir Christopher Gluck's opera 'Orfeo.' Nearly the whole weight of this opera lay on Tenducci, who, though an Atlas of former times, found his physical powers so much diminished, that he was unable to bear the pressure to the satisfaction of the public. Signora Ferrerese was not equal to the part of *Euridice*. No other novelty was presented that season.

In the early part of this winter Mr. Crosdill, the celebrated violoncello player, who had the

honour of being instructor on that instrument to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, called on me to inquire if I could attend a concert on the following evening at Carlton House. I replied that I should be happy to do so, but I must ask permission of the proprietor of Covent Garden Theatre before I could decide. He said he would call on me for my answer the next morning; which he did, when I had the mortification of being compelled to inform him that Mr. Harris had refused me. Mr. Crosdill observed, that he was sorry for it, for when he attended his Royal Highness to state my answer of the former day, the first question he asked was, "Does young Parke come?" At that time I had not sufficient experience to know that the commands of my prince should have superseded every other authority.

The latter part of last year (1784) Giardini left England for Italy, under the patronage of Sir William Hamilton, the British ambassador to the court of Naples, a gentleman highly distinguished for his love of the arts. Before his departure, I was introduced to Giardini at the house of a friend, and after dinner sung a part in his popular glee, 'Beviamo tutti tre,' with him and Mr. Shield. As a young man, I was much gratified at being introduced to one who possessed such

splendid talent, and had rendered such essential benefit to his profession. Giardini, who was a sensible and gentlemanly man, with a high and honourable spirit, had for several years given musical instruction to the Duchess of M——h, and had been in the habit of passing two or three months of the summer for that purpose at the family seat, B——m, in O—e, where he had lived as one of the family. The duke, who was a very reserved man, at length considering his presence at meals to be a restraint, caused the duchess to request Giardini would have a table furnished for him in his own apartment, which he refused, declining to stay any longer at B——m. He, however, attended her grace as usual in London, till the end of the following winter, when the duchess, who was said to be fond of money, observing to him, whilst settling his account, that he had charged one lesson too much, deducted half a guinea. Giardini, whose pride was greatly hurt, bowed submission, but would never afterwards attend her grace. For many years after his arrival in England he was so popular, that while performing his violin concertos in public, he was as much applauded as Garrick. His favouritism in private life was also very great, and he was patronised by a host of the nobility, &c., who almost idolised his extraordinary talent.

Among his numerous admirers Lady Bingley was conspicuous. That lady, whenever his annual benefit was announced, always gave a grand party at her house; and, during the evening, addressing her friends individually, said, good-humouredly, without specifying her object, "Give me five guineas, my lord,"—"Give me five guineas, my lady," and so on, which being of course complied with, she in return presented them with a ticket for Giardini's benefit. Lady Bingley was not only Giardini's living but dying friend, for on her death-bed she bequeathed him four hundred pounds per annum during life.

Lolli, the great violin player of the continent, who had lately arrived in England, gave a public concert, in which he performed a concerto. His execution was astonishing, and the tricks he played in various parts of it excited the risibility more than the admiration of the auditors.

The Pantheon concert commenced on Thursday the 2d of February; Madame Mara and Signor Franchi were the singers. Crosdill performed a concerto on the violoncello, in which he evinced such power, brilliancy of execution, and taste, as to defy competition. This gentleman possessed an uncontrolled dominion over the finger-board of the violoncello. I have heard him play the favourite minuet of Handel's in the overture to

'Ariadne,' in three parts, as distinctly and as perfectly as if they had been performed by three of our most finished performers. Salomon led the band, and played a violin concerto, in which he displayed original and powerful talent. Salomon, in his own country, attended the Prince ———. After teaching him for some time, the prince said to him one day, "Well, Mr. Salomon, how do I get on?"—"Please your highness," said Salomon, "der are tre stages of music. First, der is pick out, read notes, count time, &c. not play at all. Second, der is play, but play very bad,—out of time, out of tune, noting at all. Now your highness has just got into de second stage."

The Hanover Square concert, now for the first time styled the "Professional Concert," it being undertaken by a company of professors, began the same evening. Harrison and Tenducci were the singers. Fischer's oboe concerto was replete with taste and expression, and the veteran Abel, who had recovered from a severe indisposition, performed a solo on the viol di gamba with his accustomed elegance and sensibility.

Abel, who had for many years made large libations at the shrine of Bacchus, had ruptured a small blood vessel, which confined him for some time. During this illness he was ordered by his phy-

sician to keep in bed, and to abstain from wine. The latter injunction mortified him extremely. When the doctor made his daily visit, Abel, with great anxiety, asked him of what colour the saliva was, when, if he replied that it was red, Abel would sink his head on his pillow, and exclaim in despair, "Oh! I shall never taste my beloved old hock again!" On a future day, however, Abel having put the usual question to the physician, and receiving for answer that it was white, cried out in an ecstasy of joy, "Ah! tank Got! I shall taste my beloved old hock once more!"

Their Majesties honoured the oratorios at Drury Lane Theatre with their presence on the six Fridays in Lent. The first was on the 11th February, when was performed the Messiah. The principal vocal parts were sung by Messrs. Norris and Reinhold, Misses Phillips and George; and the concertos were performed by Crosdill, on the violoncello, the elder Parke on the oboe, and Miss Parke (first time) on the piano-forte. This young lady displayed neat and brilliant execution, together with great taste and expression. She was loudly applauded. The leader was Mr. Richards, and the conductor at the organ Mr. Stanley, who, though blind, performed with the utmost accuracy.

This eminent organ-player was deprived of his sight when a child, by falling on a marble hearth with a wash-hand basin in his hands.

Some few years ago, his Majesty George the Third patronised and honoured with his presence the oratorios at the King's Theatre in the Hay-market, on the Friday evenings during Lent, conducted by Mr. Bach, the celebrated German composer, who was musician to the Queen. These performances notwithstanding were so thinly attended throughout the season, that they might (as the theatrical hero has it) have been termed "a beggarly account of empty boxes." On Friday morning, General Fitzpatrick meeting Mr. Hare, the witty member of Parliament, said to him, "Do you go to the oratorio in the Hay-market this evening?"—"Oh no," replied Mr. Hare, "I have no wish to intrude on his Majesty's privacy."

The concert of ancient music, which was for the first time honoured with the presence of their Majesties, commenced at Tottenham Street, on the 19th of February. Madame Mara, Miss Abrams, Mr. Harrison, and Signor Tasca, sang to the entire satisfaction of their Majesties and the subscribers. Cramer led the band, and Mr. Bates presided at the organ.

A new opera, in two acts, called 'The Nun-

nery,' written by Mr. Pearce, was produced at Covent Garden on the 12th of April. The overture and the rest of the music were composed by Mr. Shield, whose abilities were never more successful. At the rehearsals of it Mrs. Webb, an excellent though very irritable actress, in the line of 'The Duenna,' &c., being unable to articulate the word *inexplicable*, and Mr. Harris the manager having frequently, though in vain, endeavoured to set her right, she at length impatiently exclaimed, "What the devil does the author mean by writing such damned nonsense in his piece?" This lady, who was one of the tallest and most bulky women I ever beheld, coming to the theatre one morning, complained of a pain in the small of her back, and was incensed beyond measure at a gentleman saying to her, "Pray, Mrs. Webb, which is the *small* of your back?" Mrs. Webb was a great favourite with the public, and acted in play or farce, often in both, every night. She was in the habit of recruiting herself after the fatigues of the week by dining in bed on Sundays, even in the dog-days, off a hot roasted leg of pork, stuffed with sage and onions!

Mr. Hull, the respectable stage-manager of Covent Garden Theatre, having determined to give for his benefit, on the 22d of April, Milton's 'Mask of Comus,' and intending to bring for-

ward, as an attractive novelty, Mrs. Pinto, (the once celebrated Miss Brent, the original Mandane in Arne's 'Artaxerxes,') to sing the song of 'Sweet Echo,' requested I would do him the favour to call on her, and rehearse it with her, the responses being made with the oboe. I accordingly went to her residence the next day, which was at a shop in Blackmoor-street, Clare-market, one half of which was occupied by a confectioner, and the other by a vender of bark and rhubarb, a combination of callings calculated to show that the sweets of life are seldom to be met with unaccompanied by their concomitant bitters. I was introduced to Mrs. Pinto, and rehearsed the song with her. Although nearly seventy years old, her voice possessed the remains of those qualities for which it had been so much celebrated,—power, flexibility, and sweetness. On the night 'Comus' was performed she sung with an unexpected degree of excellence, and was loudly applauded. This old lady, as a singer, gave me the idea of a fine piece of ruins, which, though considerably dilapidated, still displayed some of its original beauties.

There were this year four grand performances of sacred music from the works of Handel, in Westminster Abbey, on the same grand scale as last year, by command of their Majesties, the profits of which

were applied to the fund for decayed musicians and their families, the Westminster Hospital and St. George's Hospital. The whole of the performances, the first of which was on the 2d of June, were executed with great effect, in the presence of their Majesties and full and fashionable audiences.

A new comic opera, in three acts, written by Mr. Cobb, was presented at Drury Lane Theatre on the 8th of December. It was entitled 'The Strangers at Home.' The music composed and compiled by Mr. Linley, one of the proprietors of that theatre. Mrs. Jordan, the fascinating comic actress, in the song, in male attire, 'When first I began, sir, to ogle the ladies,' to the old tune of Alley Croker, enraptured the audience, who honoured her with a loud encore. The music of this opera is highly creditable to the talent of Mr. Linley. Mrs. Jordan, though not what could be termed a regular singer, occasionally introduced into her characters in comedy a ballad or two, which she sang without accompaniments, in a style of such exquisite sweetness and expression, as uniformly delighted her auditors.

1786.

The Italian opera was this year aided by Signor Babini and Signora Sestini. They appeared, for

the first time, in a new opera of Paesiello, intitled 'Il Marchese Tulipano,' under the direction of Cherubini. Babini possessed a pleasing voice, and sang with great taste. In the beautiful air 'Madamina' he was greatly applauded. This air in English words, beginning 'For tenderness formed,' was afterwards introduced and sung by Mrs. Crouch, at Drury Lane Theatre, in General Burgoyne's comedy of 'The Heiress,' with universal approbation. Signora Sestini, as well known on the English as on the Italian stage, sang and acted with great animation; and in the duet with Tasca, 'Nobile al par che bella,' was loudly encored. The music of Paesiello deserves the highest praise. Madame Mara, who was engaged for the serious opera, made her *début* on the 11th of February, in Anfossi's 'Didone abandonata,' to the fullest house during the season. This opera afforded Mara full scope for the display of her extraordinary powers. She sang five airs, and a part in a terzetto, and in all evinced the utmost energy, taste, and expression. She was vehemently applauded. The serious opera was at length rendered complete by the first appearance of Signor Rubinelli, in conjunction with Madame Mara, on the 4th of May, in a new serious opera, composed by Tarchi, called 'Virginia.' Rubinelli's figure was good, his acting chaste and

expressive; and his voice (a contr' alto) and style of singing incomparable. He gave the utmost satisfaction, and was vehemently applauded. Mara, who, on account of her hauteur, had received some sharp rubs from the public, sang with great effect; and all her airs, with the exception of those she herself assumed, excited great admiration.

Shakspeare, in his 'Comedy of Errors,' has drawn two characters (the two Dromios) so much alike in person that they are continually mistaken for each other. This has been generally considered a dramatic fiction, calculated to produce amusing incidents, and to bring about a striking *dénouement;* but it is believed that no such thing ever occurred in real life. This opinion, however, must be founded in error, for we have on record a well attested case, in the wife of a gentleman in France, whose twin children grew up so much alike, that the mother was at length compelled to fasten a coloured ribband round the waist of one of them, to distinguish him from his brother! An instance of a similar kind, in adults, which comes within my own knowledge, exists in this country. His Royal Highness the late Duke of Cumberland, brother to George the Third, had amongst his household-band of musicians two Germans, brothers, who resembled each other so strongly,

that when they occasionally attended separately to play on the violin at Vauxhall Gardens I have frequently discovered that I was speaking to Casper, when I imagined I was addressing John. Nay, even the members of the duke's household were at a loss to recognise them when they were not together. Likenesses also, where no degree of consanguinity existed between the parties, have been so powerful, that persons have been very seriously inconvenienced thereby, as the following fact will show:—there lately belonged to the orchestra of the King's Theatre in the Haymarket a highly respectable and clever musician (a foreigner) named Gehot, who, according to the custom of the perform ers of that establishment, was in the habit of frequenting the Orange Coffee-house on the opposite side of the street. This gentleman, as it proved, bearing a strong resemblance to a thief, was watched into the coffee-room one Monday evening, and was there apprehended for a highway robbery, committed between the hours of ten and eleven o'clock on the preceding Saturday night. When taken before the magistrate at Bow Street for examination, the prosecutor swore most positively to his identity; and he must have been committed to prison for trial had not an alibi been clearly proved by the manager of the King's Theatre, the leader of the

band, and a host of the performers swearing that he was, as usual, engaged professionally in the orchestra during the performance of an opera, from seven till twelve o'clock on the night on which the robbery was perpetrated.

The concert of ancient music commenced at Tottenham Street January 31: their Majesties honoured it with their presence. The Earl of Exeter was director; Mr. Cramer was the leader, and Madame Mara and Mr. Harrison the principal singers. The professional concert began in Hanover Square on the sixth of February; Signor Tenducci, Signor Babini, Miss Cantelo, (afterwards Mrs. Harrison,) and Signora Ferrerese were the singers. Clementi presided at the piano-forte; Cramer and Fischer played concertos on the violin and oboe, and Abel performed a solo on the viol di gamba inimitably.

A week before this concert commenced, I met Abel at dinner, at the house of Mr. B—l, where, according to custom, he indulged so much in the pleasures of the table, that he was with some difficulty got into the drawing-room in the evening to a music party. Abel, having repeatedly refused to play, Mr. Richards, who led the orchestra at Drury Lane Theatre, an intimate friend of his, said to him good-humouredly, "Come, come, Abel, pray oblige us; if you'll play I'll play,

though I know how much I must suffer by comparison." On hearing this Abel, whose constitutional vanity was roused, stared at him indignantly, and exclaimed aloud, "Vat, shallenge Abel! No, no, dere ish but one *Got* and one *Abel!*"

Salomon gave six subscription concerts in Hanover Square, the first of which took place on the second of March; Madame Mara, Miss Chenu, and Mr. Harrison were the singers. Two new French-horn players, Messrs. Palsa and Thurshmit, who had only played previously at the Anacreontic Society, made their first appearance in public in a concertante for that instrument. The most striking part of their exhibition was their horns, which were made of silver.

At Covent Garden Theatre Mrs. Billington, who had been performing with success on the Dublin stage, made her *début* on the London boards, on the thirteenth of February, as Rosetta, in the opera of 'Love in a Village.' She sang the songs of Rosetta in a different style to that which the public had been accustomed to hear, and although she had not had much experience, she gave them with such sweetness, taste, and brilliancy, that the audience, who were both surprised and delighted, bestowed on her unbounded applause.

Amongst the friends of Mr. Harris, the proprietor of Covent Garden Theatre, none was more

intimate with him than Mr. Hugh Dives, who was a man of fortune, and had been an officer in the guards. Mr. George Dives, his brother, was also acquainted with Mr. Harris. Mr. Hugh Dives was so much attached to the theatre, wherein he had embarked a few thousands, that he was seldom out of it during the season of its being open; and having the free use of Mr. Harris's private box and the green-room, a night or morning scarcely passed without his visiting them. These two brothers were of very different dispositions, Mr. George Dives being polite and good-humoured, while Mr. Hugh Dives was rude and ill-tempered. One morning, during the rehearsal of the before-mentioned opera, Mr. George Dives, being in search of his brother, and conceiving that he was in the green-room, proceeded thither, where, being informed that he had just left, he, on his return over the stage to follow him, said to the elder Bannister—"Mr. Bannister, have you seen my brother *cross?*"—"Sir," said Bannister, "I never saw him otherwise!"

Six oratorios were given this season for the first time, by command of their Majesties, on the six Fridays in Lent, at the Tottenham Street Rooms, under the same direction, and the same regulations as the concerts of ancient music. They commenced on Friday the first of March. Madame

Mara, Mr. Harrison, and Mrs. Billington, were the principal singers. The oratorios at Drury Lane Theatre, conducted by Dr. Arnold, commenced on the same evening with 'The Messiah.' The singers were Messrs. Reinhold, Bellamy, jun., Mrs. Forster, and Miss George. At the end of the first act I performed a concerto on the oboe. The leader was Mr. Shaw. During the third night's performance, owing to the negligence of the carpenters of the theatre, who erected the orchestra on the stage, an alarming accident happened between the second and third acts of the oratorio. The upper tier, on which were stationed the trumpets, French-horns, bassoons, and kettle-drums, suddenly gave way, and the performers who were on it were precipitated down a descent of fourteen feet; but fortunately no one was seriously injured. Nelson, the pompous kettle-drummer, who had escaped unhurt, strutting about with his usual dignity, said to those who lay sprawling on the floor, "Gentlemen! if any of you have broken a limb, make yourselves perfectly easy, for Mr. Pott, the celebrated surgeon, is in the pit." The following day I met Hook the composer, who had witnessed the accident. In speaking of it he said, in his whimsical manner, "When it happened, I was astonished, for I had

never even heard of an oratorio with *tumbling* between the acts!"

A new comic opera was produced at Covent Garden Theatre on the 8th of March, called 'The Fair Peruvian.' The overture and music were by Mr. Hook. In this piece Mrs. Billington, whose powers were now considerably developed, sang two airs with such uncommon effect, that the audience were quite enthusiastic in the applause they gave her. "In the overture," says a critic, "the second movement was obligato for the pianoforte (played on that night by the composer, Mr. Hook,) and the oboe. Young Parke (W. T. Parke) in the oboe part, displayed a sweet, flexible tone, and great taste and feeling."

On one of the nights this opera was announced to be performed the sudden indisposition of Mrs. Billington compelled Mr. Harris, the manager, to change the play, there not being any lady in the theatre who could undertake her character. This unavoidable circumstance occasioned a tumult amongst the audience, which raged with violence. Charles Bannister, the excellent bass singer, being on the stage during its acme, was desired by the manager, from the side scenes, to address the audience. Bannister, who was more remarkable for his wit than his eloquence, was instantly seized

with that sort of tremor which generally fastens on persons, when, by some sudden transition, the association of ideas is disturbed; and, reluctantly approaching the foot-lamps at the front of the stage, said, in the true phraseology of a licensed victualler, "Ladies and gentlemen, what will you please to have?"—"A pot of porter," vociferated a fellow in the gallery, "for this place is as hot as hell!" This reply was instantly succeeded by a general laugh, which, turning the tide of disapprobation, the actors were permitted to go through the play without further interruption.

Ranelagh Gardens opened on the seventeenth of April with a grand concert of vocal and instrumental music, patronised by his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

There were three grand performances this year at Westminster Abbey, by command, and under the patronage of their Majesties. They commenced on the 31st of May; and were under the direction of the honorary noble president, and the noble vice-presidents of the Royal Society of Musicians, so styled by command of the King, George the Third. Madame Mara and Mrs. Billington were at the head of the vocal corps, and Cramer led the band, which was considerably increased in number. The profits of these performances were applied in aid of the fund of the Royal Society of

Musicians, the Westminster Hospital, and the Sons of the Clergy. Their Majesties were accompanied by the Queen's brother, the Prince of Mecklenburg, the Princess Royal, and five other princesses. The abbey was thronged at the performance of the 'Messiah.' At the last rehearsal, owing to some neglect, there were not the customary refreshments prepared for the magistrates who attended. On Mr. Justice B—d entering the room wherein they had been usually displayed, and not seeing any preparation for them, he said, with surprise, "Are we not to have any of the good things of this world to-day?" Being answered in the negative, "Oh!" said he, "if that's the case, I can be of no use here; so I wish you a good morning," and departed! That justices of the peace have been long famed for good living, admits not of doubt: indeed it may be clearly traced as far back as the reign of Elizabeth, (who, by the by, loved a good beef-steak for breakfast,) for Shakspeare describes one, "With fair round belly with capon lined;" and, if we may hazard a conjecture, the science of gastronomy might have been known amongst the quorum, even at a much more remote period.

Mr. Justice Collick, the hair merchant of St. Martin's Lane, with whom I was acquainted, displayed a different disposition to his before-named

worship, being, though a little eccentric, kind and liberal. He was good-natured, though at times he affected to be severe. He did not care a straw for money, while he was desirous to appear frugal. He had acquired a large fortune in trade, and was from habit still so devoted to it, that though he had an elegant house at Clapham, where he always slept, he never failed being in his carriage at nine in the morning, Sundays excepted, and in the midst of his business at ten. Mr. Collick, who was in the commission of the peace for Middlesex, having no family, was at all times happy to see a few of his old friends, mostly musical ones, drop in at the dinner hour, for whom preparations were made whether they came or not. Among the oldest and most intimate was Mr. Crosdill, the celebrated violoncello player, who, when he intended visiting Collick, proceeded to the fishmonger, poulterer, &c. of the latter, and directed those articles he preferred to be sent to his house for dinner. When Collick was informed of such arrivals, he pretended to be displeased, exclaiming, "Ah! now I see that scape-grace, Jack Crosdill, is coming, rot him!" while he was secretly highly gratified. Indeed, the most happy hours of his life were those in which his friends passed their time with him in that manner. The old gen-

tleman being one day taken with a fit of economy, and considering that his servants consumed at their luncheons an unreasonable quantity of cheese, hit on a scheme by which he thought he would restrain them in future. He posted to the warehouse of his brother magistrate, Slaughter, the cheesemonger, and desired to see a good and strong Cheshire cheese. After having tasted two or three which he thought too mild, they produced one which they called a peeler, a name appropriate enough, it having blistered his tongue whilst tasting it. "Ay," said Collick, "this is quite the thing I wanted. Send it to my house." The servants, however, rejected the peeler, and in future eat meat instead of it. Collick at length discovering this, through the increased amount of his butcher's bill, said to himself, "I see my scheme don't take,—I have been too cunning for myself;" and, ringing his bell for the servants, good-humouredly told them that, "as they could not eat the peeler themselves, they might send it as a present to the fire-eater, who would perhaps think it too mild."

Vauxhall Gardens opened for the season on the first of June, with a brilliant fête, intitled 'The Vauxhall Jubilee,' the gardens having been established half a century. Mr. Incledon sang there

that season for the first time, with great applause. The songs, &c. by Mr. Hook were appropriate and pleasing.

Walking with James Hook the composer, and his first wife, to view the British Museum, we were accosted by a female beggar, one of the most miserable in appearance imaginable. The poor creature, who solicited alms, had neither shoe nor stocking on, and her dress consisted literally of "shreds and patches," while she amused herself, during the whole of her solicitation, with a practice well known north of the Tweed, that of scratching her thigh. The applicant being disgusting as well as wretched, Hook, who was never at a loss for a pun, in order to get rid of her, (which was no easy thing,) wrapt some money in a piece of paper, and keeping at a respectful distance, dropped it into her hand, saying at the same time,—"There, good woman, is sixpence for you; but I must say, you are a very *feel-thigh* (filthy) woman."

A translation of the popular French piece, 'Richard Cœur de Lion,' was produced at Drury Lane Theatre on the twentieth of October, with the original music by Gretry. Miss Romanzini (afterwards Mrs. Bland) sang the pretty chanson, 'The merry dance,' with great *naïveté* and effect. The character of Richard was acted by Mr. John Kemble, who, though he had not a singing voice,

got through the two-part song, on which the plot hinges, better than was expected. At one of the rehearsals of this piece Kemble, who had got the tune of it tolerably well, being very deficient in keeping the time, Mr. Shaw, the leader of the band, impatiently exclaimed, "Mr. Kemble, that won't do at all!—you *murder* time abominably!" —"Well, Mr. Shaw," replied Kemble, "it is better to *murder* it, than to be continually *beating* it as you are."

The composer of the music of 'Richard Cœur de Lion,' Gretry, was born at Liege, a well-known town in Westphalia, in the year 1741. At an early age he became sensible to the charms of music, and, to this sensibility, when he was only four years old, he was near falling a sacrifice. It is related of him, that being left alone in a room where some water was boiling in an iron pot over a wood fire, the sound caught his ear, and for some time he amused himself by dancing to it. The curiosity of the child, however, at length prompted him to uncover the vessel, and in so doing he overset it; the water fell upon and dreadfully scalded him from head to foot. From the care and attention that were paid to him by his parents and medical attendant, he at length recovered in every respect from this accident, except having a weakness of sight, which continued ever after-

wards. When he was six years old his father (a teacher of music) placed him in the choir of the collegiate church of St. Denis, and unfortunately, but necessarily, under the tuition of a master who was brutal and inhuman to all his pupils. Young Gretry had his full share of ill-treatment; yet such was his attachment to this man, that he never could prevail upon himself to disclose it to his father, fearing that by his influence the chapter might be induced to take some steps that would be injurious to him. An accident, which for a time put a stop to his studies, deserves to be related here. It was usual at Liege to tell children that God will grant to them whatever they ask of him at their first communion: young Gretry had long proposed to pray on that occasion that he might immediately die if he were not destined to be an honest man, and a man of eminence in his profession. On that very day, having gone to the top of the tower to see the men strike the wooden bells which are always used during the Passion-week, a beam of considerable weight fell on his head, and laid him senseless upon the floor. A person who was present ran for the extreme unction; but on his return he found the youth upon his legs. On being shown the heavy log that had fallen upon him,—"Well, well," he exclaimed, "since I am not killed, I am now sure

that I shall be an honest man and a good musician." He did not at first appear to have sustained any serious injury, but his mouth was full of blood, and the next day a depression of the cranium was discovered; on which, however, no operation was attempted, and which was suffered to continue. From this time, but whether owing to the accident or not, it is not known, his disposition was considerably altered. His former gaiety gave way in a great measure to sadness, and never afterwards returned, except at intervals. On his return to the choir he acquitted himself by no means to the satisfaction of his father, who for a time withdrew him for the purpose of his receiving further instruction. He was now placed under the care of a master as mild as the other had been severe. When his father replaced him in the choir, his improvement both in singing and playing was found to have been very great. The first time he sang in the choir, the orchestra, delighted with his voice, and fearing to lose the sound of it, was reduced to the pianissimo; the children of the choir around him drew back from respect; almost all the canons left their seats, and were deaf to the bell that announced the elevation of the Host. All the chapter, all the city, all the actors of the Italian Theatre applauded him; and the savage master

himself took him by the hand, and told him that he would become a musician of great eminence. Some little time afterwards his voice began to break. It would then have been prudent to have forbidden his singing ; but this not being done, a spitting of blood was brought on, to which, on any exertion, he was ever afterwards subject. Not long subsequently to this he was placed under the care of Moreau ; but such was the exuberance of his genius, that he had previously attempted several of the most complicated kinds of music. "I composed six symphonies," says Gretry, "which were successfully executed in our city. M. Hasler, the canon, begged me to let him carry them to the concert. He encouraged me greatly, advised me to go to Rome in order to pursue my studies, and offered me his purse. My master in composition thought this little success would be mischievous to me, and prevent me from pursuing that regular course of study so necessary to my becoming a sound contrapuntist. He never mentioned my symphonies." Gretry walked to Rome in the early part of 1759, being then only eighteen years of age. Here, in order that his genius might be as much unfettered as possible, he studied under several masters, and he almost every day visited the churches in order to hear the music of Casali, Eurisechio, and Lus-

trini, but particularly that of the former, with which he was greatly delighted. The ardour with which he pursued his studies was so great, that it suffered him to pay but little attention to his health. This consequently became much impaired, and he was obliged for a while to leave Rome and retire into the country. One day, on Mount Millini, he met a hermit, who gave him an invitation to his retreat, which he accepted, and he became his inmate and companion for three months. He returned to Rome, and, young as he then was, he distinguished himself by the composition of an intermezzo, entitled ' Le Vende Miatrice.' His success was so decisive that he was very near suffering fatally from the jealousy of a rival in his profession. Admired and courted in the capital of Italy, Gretry here continued his labours and his studies with assiduity and perseverance, till Mr. Mellon, a gentleman in the suite of the French ambassador, incited in him a desire to visit Paris. In his way to that city in the year 1767, he stopped at Geneva, and there composed his first French opera of ' Isabelle et Gertrude.' Respecting the performance of this work he relates an amusing anecdote. " One of the performers in the orchestra, a dancing-master, came to me in the morning previously to the representation, to inform me that some young people

intended to call for me on the stage with acclamation at the end of the piece, in the same manner as at Paris. I told him I had never seen that done in Italy. 'You will, however, see it here,' says he, 'and you will be the first composer who has received this honour in our republic.' It was in vain for me to dispute the point; he would absolutely teach me the bow that I was to make with a proper grace. As soon as the opera was finished they called for me sure enough, and with great vehemence. I was obliged to appear to thank the audience for their indulgence; but my friend in the orchestra cried out aloud, 'Poh! that is not it!—not at all!—but get along!'—'What's the matter?' asked his brethren in the orchestra. 'I am out of all patience,' said the dancing-master. 'I went to his lodgings this morning, on purpose to show him how to present himself nobly; and did you ever see such an awkward booby?'" It was some time before Gretry could obtain in Paris a piece to compose; and he was first introduced to public notice there, in 1768, by writing the music to Marmontel's opera 'Le Huron.' This met with the most flattering success. The opera of 'Lucile' followed, which was even more successful. His fame was now established in France, and he produced near thirty comic operas for the great

opera house in Paris. Of these ‘ Zemire et Azor,’ and ‘ Richard Cœur de Lion,’ have been translated and successfully brought on the English stage. The taste of the Parisians tended greatly to corrupt that of Gretry; but he has done much towards improving theirs: they have met about half way; and perhaps the genius of the French language, the style of singing, and the national prejudices, even if he had determined to continue inflexible, could not have admitted of a nearer approximation than we find in his music. Sacchini has been known to say of Gretry, that he remembered him at Naples, where he regarded him as a young man of great genius, who wrote as much in the style of that school as even any of the Italian masters; but that when he heard his comic opera at Paris, many years afterwards, he did not find that his style had much improved by composing to French words and for French singers. Gretry, during the times of anarchy in France, became tainted with revolutionary principles: he went so far as to publish a work on the subject of religion, intitled, ‘ De la vérité de ce que nous fûmes, ce que nous sommes, et ce que nous devrons être;’ which shows him also to have been deeply tinctured with infidelity. He died at Montmorency on the 24th of September, 1813.

In the year 1784, when the opera in three acts, called ‘ Robin Hood,’ was first produced at Covent Garden Theatre, it soon became very popular, and had a long run to overflowing houses. In consequence of the great success of this piece, the author of it, MacNally, then a briefless barrister of the sister kingdom, who had come to England to court Dame Fortune, but who had only become acquainted with her illegitimate sister, Miss Fortune, rose high in the favour of Mr. Harris, the proprietor of that theatre. Mr. Harris intending to bring out, this season, the favourite French musical piece called, ‘ Richard Cœur de Lion,’ then performing with great success at Drury Lane Theatre, in the plenitude of his partiality he gave the copy of it to MacNally to translate and adapt it for the English stage. MacNally, who, though totally unacquainted with the French language, was nevertheless too poor to stick to trifles, employed a friend to put it into English for him; but it proving altogether a lame production, it limped on for a few nights, but had no run. The following season Mr. Harris revived ‘ Robin Hood’ at his theatre, in which a new singer named Bowden appeared in the principal character, Robin Hood. This performer’s talent not being of any high order the houses, which, at the first production of the opera

had been overflowing, were now miserably thin; on which an actor one night behind the scenes, observing the benches to be nearly empty, exclaimed, "Here's a wretched house!—Do ye call this Robin Hood?"—"No," replied Charles Bannister, "it is not Robbin Hood,—it's Robbing Harris!" This same singer (Bowden) had a remarkably prominent proboscis. He and some other vocalists of the theatre, being subsequently engaged to attend a public dinner, had appointed to meet at Williams's coffee-house in Bow Street, Covent Garden, situated on the spot where the entrance to the boxes now stands, where, having waited till the last moment for Bowden, they left the coffee-room to proceed to their destination without him. When they had got into the street, however, Bannister suddenly exclaimed, "Stop, stop! Bowden will be here in a minute or two, for I perceive that his nose has already turned the corner of Hart Street!"

This season I became an honorary member of the Anacreontic Society, and at the first meeting played a concerto on the oboe, as did Cramer on the violin. The assemblage of subscribers was as usual very numerous, amongst whom were several noblemen and gentlemen of the first distinction. Sir Richard Hankey (the banker) was the chairman. This fashionable society consisted of a

limited number of members, each of whom had the privilege of introducing a friend, for which he paid in his subscription accordingly. The meetings were held in the great ball-room of the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand, once a fortnight during the season, and the entertainments of the evening consisted of a grand concert, in which all the flower of the musical profession assisted as honorary members. After the concert an elegant supper was served up; and when the cloth was removed, the constitutional song, beginning, 'To Anacreon in Heaven,' was sung by the chairman or his deputy. This was followed by songs in all the varied styles, by theatrical singers and the members; and catches and glees were given by some of the first vocalists in the kingdom. The late chairman, Mr. Mulso, possessed a good tenor voice, and sang the song alluded to with great effect. A curious circumstance occurred to that gentleman, whose person was by no means athletic. As he was walking down Southampton-street, Covent Garden, with a friend, a horse belonging to a hackney coach, waiting at a shop door, suddenly seized him by the arm, and with his teeth so severely gripped it, that, stimulated by surprise and pain, he, like another Milo, struck the animal on the head with

his doubled fist with such force, that it felled him to the earth as if he had been shot.

The above-mentioned gentleman was a most agreeable companion, and had a happy knack of relating stories bearing on the circumstances in which he happened to be placed. The following is an instance.

I was in a party a few years ago, in which there was a young gentleman who had recently returned from his travels. This traveller, who, like many of his fraternity, was "rather too poetical in his prose," related so many wonderful occurrences, that the surprise he had at first excited was afterwards converted into ennui. In fact, he tired the company with his marvellous loquacity. Mr. Mulso, who was present, being disgusted with his improbable narrations, and determined if possible to silence him, said to the young traveller, "Pray, sir, are you acquainted with the mode in which they catch tigers in the East Indies?" Being answered in the negative, he added, "Then, sir, I will inform you. The persons employed in that hazardous service go out for the purpose, armed only with a cork target and a wooden mallet, and when they discover one of those ferocious beasts preparing to spring upon them from amongst the jungle, they

receive him on the cork target, which his long talons passing through, they clench them on the inside with the wooden mallet, and then lead him home quietly on his hind legs !"

At the death of Mr. Mulso, Sir Richard Hankey succeeded to the presidental chair. Sir Richard, with whom I had the pleasure of being intimate, was an accomplished musical amateur, and performed admirably on the oboe. He had been in the army, and had served with his regiment during the war in North America, where he was placed in a situation of great jeopardy. The commander of the English forces having hanged an American officer, who had been taken as a spy, the American general was so incensed that he determined to retaliate, and having several British officers prisoners, among whom was Sir Richard Hankey, he ordered that they should draw lots to determine which of them should suffer. The lot fell on Captain Asgill, son of Sir Charles Asgill the banker ; but the unjust sentence being from some cause delayed, he was saved by the humane interference of Maria Antoinette, consort to Louis the Sixteenth of France.

This society, to become members of which noblemen and gentlemen would wait a year for a vacancy, was by an act of gallantry brought to a premature dissolution. The Duchess of Devon-

shire, the great leader of the *haut ton*, having heard the Anacreontic highly extolled, expressed a particular wish to some of its members to be permitted to be privately present to hear the concert, &c.; which being made known to the directors, they caused the elevated orchestra occupied by the musicians at balls to be fitted up, with a lattice affixed to the front of it, for the accommodation of her grace and party; so that they could see, without being seen; but, some of the comic songs not being exactly calculated for the entertainment of ladies, the singers were restrained; which displeasing many of the members, they resigned one after another; and a general meeting being called, the society was dissolved.

The King's Theatre opened for the season on the 23rd of December, with the serious opera of 'Alceste.' The music, which was entirely new, was by Gresnich. In this opera Rubinelli and Madame Mara delighted the audience, who bestowed on them the most unbounded applause.

1787.

The new year's Ode was composed for the first time by Mr. William Parsons, who on the death of Mr. Stanley in the preceding year, 1786, was appointed master of the King's band, and composer to his Majesty.

At the King's Theatre a new comic opera, called 'Giannina Berdoni,' was performed on the 9th of January. The music was by Cimarosa. In this opera Signora Binini, a new *prima buffa*, appeared with success. Her voice was sweet, and she sang with great taste. She was encored in a rondo of great beauty. Cimarosa appears to have had great comic talent. The first finale is remarkably fine. On the 4th of March a new serious opera, entitled 'Giulio Cesare in Egitto,' was produced. The music was entirely by Handel, and selected from the various operas of that great master by Dr. Arnold. Rubinelli sang the part assigned to him in a chaste and elegant style; and Mara delighted the audience in the air, 'Dove sei.' Rubinelli never sang with more eclat than in Handel's music. Two new performers, Signora Storace and Signor Morelli, who had been very popular in Vienna, made their first appearance on the 24th of April, in a new comic opera of Paesiello, called 'Gli Schiavi per amore.' They were extremely successful. Signora Storace displayed a clear and powerful voice. She sang in a chaste and pleasing manner, and acted with great animation. Morelli's bass voice was of a fine rich and mellow quality, and his singing and acting were of the first order. They were vehe-

mently applauded. Both the comic and serious opera were now perfect.

In the early part of January Mr. Crosdill called on me, by desire of the subscribers, to engage me to take the place of Fischer, the celebrated oboe player, at the ladies' concerts, of which he, under the ladies' directresses, was the manager. The subscribers to these concerts were of the highest class, and were considered superior judges of music. On the first night I played a concerto on the oboe I was complimented by Lords Brudenell, Ashburnham, &c. At this time I lodged in the house of a silk-dyer in New Street, Covent Garden, which occasioned Crosdill pleasantly to observe to a friend, "It would prove an awkward thing if Parke should be wanted in a hurry, for he lives at the Poles!"

This year I became acquainted with Stuart the well-known and admired portrait painter, who was infallible in his likenesses, though not equally remarkable for the elegance of his draperies. Sitting with him one evening at his house in New Burlington Street, he (who was a little enthusiastical, or pretended to be so), rising from his chair suddenly, exclaimed to me with great vehemence, "Sit still—don't stir for your life!" I stared at him with astonishment, thinking the man was

mad, till, in a subdued tone, he added, "I beg your pardon, but your drapery, as you now sit, is very effective; and I wish to make a sketch of it before you move." A few days afterwards I dined at the house of the same artist with a large party; among whom were Mr. T. Smith, a gentleman of fortune, and a very particular friend of mine, who had that day been sitting to Stuart for his portrait, and Mr. Hall, the successor of that great artist Woollet, and the engraver of the fine prints, 'The battle of the Boyne' and 'Cromwell dissolving the Long Parliament.' These masterly productions, the engraving of which took up several years' labour, were finished on the day preceding our meeting, and, according to custom, the event was celebrated in the artist's gardens, by a discharge of cannon. At that period Mr. Shield the composer, myself, and two or three other friends belonging to the Opera House, had formed a sort of Saturday night's club at the Orange Coffee-House in the Haymarket, where we supped after the play and the Italian Opera were ended. It happening, during dinner at Stuart's on Sunday, that I complained of a head-ache, Mr. Smith, who had known me ever since I was a boy, said to me in his good-natured and bantering way, "I observe that on Sundays you generally have the head-ache. How happens

that?"—"Oh," said Stuart, "I will tell you. If a man's head comes in contact with a club over night, it may be expected that it will ache the next day." Stuart, who had studied under the celebrated historical painter, Benjamin West, acknowledged that his income had for several years averaged fifteen hundred pounds; notwithstanding this he could not contrive to make both ends meet. Therefore, in order to avoid impertinent creditors, he at length departed for North America, his native land. To form some idea of the style of expense of Stuart, it may only be necessary to state, that he forgot to pay Fribourg of the Haymarket eighty pounds, which he was indebted to him for snuff only!

Having made a new engagement with Mr. Harris, the proprietor of Covent Garden Theatre, by which I secured the privilege of playing at concerts, &c. I attended those of the Prince of Wales at Carlton House, in which his Royal Highness performed on the violoncello. The band consisted of Cramer, Crosdill, Parke, (myself) Shield, Blake, Schroeter, and Waterhouse. Schroeter, who had retired from public practice, performed on the piano-forte on these occasions. His style, like his music, was expressive and elegant, and his execution was neat and rapid. He played in so graceful and quiet a manner, that

his fingers were scarcely seen to move. The admirable piano-forte player, Miss Guest, afterwards Mrs. Miles, also played in a similar way.

The Sunday concerts, for which I was engaged, commenced on the 14th of January, at Lord Hampden's. Mrs. Billington and Signor Rubinelli were the singers, and Cramer led the excellent band of the professional concert. In one of the overtures the Prince of Wales and the Dukes of Gloucester and Cumberland performed. The two former on the violoncello, and the latter on the violin. The company on that occasion, which consisted of the flower of the nobility and gentry of England, amounted to at least four hundred persons; and the dresses of both ladies and gentlemen were elegant and splendid. There was, however, one gentleman present, most remarkable for the plainness of his costume, which, notwithstanding, eclipsed all the others in value. This was Count Woronzoff, the Russian ambassador, who appeared in a plain dress suit of puce-coloured cloth, the buttons of the whole of which (then worn very large) were covered with diamonds of the first water, as were his large Artois shoe-buckles, knee-buckles, and the button and loop of his chapeau bras. The sombre appearance of one part of his dress, contrasted with the brilliancy of

the other, was extremely effective, and might be compared to one of the northern constellations on a clear winter night, with its stars glittering through the sable firmament. It was said that these elegant appendages were presented to Count Woronzoff by his royal mistress, the Empress Catherine.

The professional concert, of which I had by invitation become a member, began in Hanover Square, on Monday the 5th of February. The singers were Signor Rubinelli, Miss Celia Davis, and Mrs. Billington. Crosdill played a concerto on the violoncello, and the elder Parke one on the oboe; their fine powerful tones and brilliant execution in which afforded high gratification. On the second night I played an oboe concerto, which was honoured with general and frequent plaudits. When my concerto was ended, the Duke of Cumberland sent for me to his seat, and having complimented me on my performance, presented me with a royal ticket to admit me into Westminster Hall at the trial of Mr. Warren Hastings, which the following day I witnessed from the box allotted to peers.

Their Majesties honoured the concert of ancient music with their presence. Mara and Billington were at the head of the vocalists. It commenced on Wednesday, the 7th of February, at Totten-

ham Street. The Duke of Leeds was director; Cramer led. On the following evening, the first of six subscription concerts given by Madame Mara, at Hanover Square, took place. Mr. Harrison and Madame Mara were the singers, and Salomon led the band. Mr. Mara, the husband of Madame Mara, played a concerto on the violoncello.

Mr. Mara, who did not possess the tenth part of his wife's talent, loved her and his bottle equally, and frequently broke the head of one and cracked the other. Nevertheless he appreciated her superior merit so highly, that he occasionally ran into another extreme, and paid her extravagant attentions, as the following instance will show. This gentleman and Madame being on a visit to the Earl of Exeter, at his splendid seat, Burleigh, near Stamford, in Lincolnshire, and her caprice having induced her one day to inform her husband that she did not like Lord Exeter's claret, he immediately despatched a servant to Stamford for a post-chaise and four horses, in which he proceeded to London, and returned the following evening with a case out of her own cellar.

The oratorios, by command of their Majesties, commenced at the ancient concert rooms, Tottenham Street, on Friday the 23d of February, with Handel's 'Athalia;' and the oratorios at Drury

Lane Theatre the same evening, under the direction of Mr. Linley, Dr. Arnold, and Madame Mara. The singers were Messrs. Reinhold and Dignum, Mrs. Crouch, Miss George, and Madame Mara; Mr. Shaw led. At the end of the first part I played a concerto on the oboe, which was greatly applauded, and was repeated (by desire) on three subsequent nights.

Madame Mara, whose divine strains were listened to with great delight, occasionally exhibited such symptoms of caprice and hauteur, as to call forth the disapprobation of the public, who nevertheless, on her curtseying with even a small show of submission, like a fond parent who regrets having corrected a spoiled child, applauded her to the skies!

On the 21st of March was performed at the King's Theatre, for the benefit of the Lock Hospital, the oratorio of 'Ruth,' originally composed for that charity by Signor Felice Giardini. The principal vocal parts were sustained with great excellence by Mr. Reinhold and Mr. Kelly, who had lately arrived from the continent, Miss Abrams, and Madame Mara. Mr. Barthelemon led the band, and Mr. Wesley conducted and performed a concerto on the organ. At the end of the second act Mr. Barthelemon played one of Geminiani's concertos on the violin, in a very superior style;

and his extempore cadences were so scientific and appropriate, that they appeared to be a continuation of the composer. This gentleman, in the early part of life, had served as a midshipman in the navy of the King of Spain, but preferring the clear and dulcet notes of the fiddle to the hoarse and thundering tones of the cannon, he afterwards made music his profession. A short time after Barthelemon had arrived in England he was recommended to Garrick to compose music to a piece of his, intitled 'A peep behind the curtain.' At their first interview, Garrick, sitting down to a table to make a copy of one of the songs for him to compose by the next morning, Barthelemon, who was prepared with paper, &c., looking over Garrick's shoulder whilst he was writing, set the music to it. When Garrick had finished, he arose, and presenting the poetry to Barthelemon, said, "There, sir, is my song."—"And there, sir," said Barthelemon, "is my music to it!" 'A peep behind the curtain' (an improvement on the Duke of Buckingham's 'Rehearsal') had an astonishing long run to overflowing houses. In it was introduced a burletta, called 'Orpheus and Eurydice,' the music of which was excellent; and a scene, the most popular of the whole, wherein Orpheus, by the force of his

lyre, made not only men but trees and cows dance!

Garrick, who was proverbially fond of money, had agreed to give Barthelemon fifty guineas for composing the music to this piece; but when the awful time to pay him had arrived, Garrick told him that his dancing cows had cost him so much that he could not afford to give him more than forty. A whimsical circumstance occurred to Barthelemon in my presence, whilst leading the band at Vauxhall Gardens. One Saturday night, (the then fashionable night of the week,) when the gardens were extremely full of genteel company, a bat, who had "winged his cloistered flight" for some time about the walks, to the great annoyance of the visitors, at length, during the second act of the concert, went into the illuminated orchestra, and after having made two or three circuits round it, flew into the face of Barthelemon the leader, and hurled him from his elevated seat upon the floor, amidst universal shouts of laughter from the audience. Barthelemon, who fell on his sword and thereby broke it, was soon picked up, and joining in the laugh, said to those who assisted him, 'Well, it is fortunate for me, that in falling on my own sword, I did not do it after the old Roman fashion!"

Mrs. Billington, whose popularity was fast increasing, appeared at Covent Garden Theatre on the 13th of April, for the first time, as Mandane, in Arne's fine opera of 'Artaxerxes.' She sang the airs, recitatives, &c. admirably; and in the favourite song, 'The soldier tired,' her fine voice and brilliant execution produced a general encore. It having become fashionable to bring on our stage popular French pieces, a translation of one, in two acts, founded on Sterne's story of Maria, in his 'Sentimental Journey,' was produced at Covent Garden Theatre, on the 24th of April, under the title of 'Nina,' with the original music by Dalyrac, adapted to the English words by me. Mrs. Billington sang the music of the part of 'Nina' with great feeling and expression, and was loudly and deservedly applauded.

Doctor Walcot, who put 'Nina' into English, and who wrote under the assumed name of Peter Pindar, had in early life practised for several years in the West Indies as a physician. He was in the habit of relating anecdotes of persons he had known in that part of the world with great humour, of which the following is a specimen:— Mr. S—w, a rich planter in Jamaica, who was a man of eccentric character and unfeeling nature, had an only son, whose disposition was not a whit more amiable than his father's. The old gentle-

man being taken dangerously ill, refused all medical aid, swearing, that if a physician were called in he should have no chance of recovery; therefore he would leave it all to nature. Nature, however, played him a slippery trick, and he died, leaving to his hopeful son the whole of his extensive property. A short time after the old man's death Dr. Walcot met Guaco, who had been many years a domestic slave in the family, when the following short but pithy dialogue took place:

Doctor.—"Well, Guaco! so your old master's dead?"

Guaco.—"Ifs, old massa be gone dead."

Doctor.—"And how do you like your young master? He's a chip of the old block, I fancy."

Guaco.—"O, dam im, massa; im all old block."

Cubit, a very subordinate actor and singer of Covent Garden Theatre, who was what is termed in theatrical phraseology a useful performer, one who would undertake to act in tragedy, comedy, opera, farce, or pantomime, was engaged this summer to enliven the inhabitants of Richmond by performing there. Cubit, whose countenance was not calculated to make any great impression on the ladies, had a very swarthy complexion and a remarkably black beard, which however closely shaved, still appeared as dark as Erebus. Whilst

performing at the Richmond Theatre, he on one occasion appeared (not highly to the gratification of the audience) in the character of Captain Macheath in the 'Beggar's Opera.' Whilst he was figuring in this part, one of the actors, who was witnessing his performance behind the scenes, said to Charles Bannister, "Do you call this Macheath?"—"No," replied Bannister in his odd way, "it is a great deal more like Blackheath!" This same performer, Cubit, during one of his summer engagements at a provincial theatre, was announced to perform the character of Hamlet a second time, though he had not been much relished at his first appearance in that arduous part; but being seized with a sudden and serious illness in the dressing-room, just before the play was going to begin, the manager having "no more cats than would catch mice," was constrained to request the audience to suffer them to go through the play, omitting the character of Hamlet; which being complied with, it was afterwards considered by the bulk of the audience to be a great improvement! Although this may appear ridiculous and improbable, an occurrence of a similar kind took place several years afterwards at Covent Garden Theatre, where Cook, the popular actor, having got drunk, the favourite afterpiece of 'Love à la

Mode' was performed before a London audience (he being absent) without the principal character, Sir Archy Macsarcasm!

An institution, termed The New Musical Fund, gave their first benefit-concert at the King's Theatre on the 12th of April, under the direction of Dr. Hayes and Dr. Miller, who, with a large roll of parchment, beat time most unmercifully. Signor Rubinelli, Mr. Harrison, and Mrs. Billington sang on the occasion; and Cramer led the band, composed of two hundred performers, the whole of whom assisted gratuitously. The house was full.

Mr. Kelly appeared for the first time on the English stage, at Drury Lane Theatre, on the 20th of April, in the character of Lionel, in the opera of 'Lionel and Clarissa,' with complete success.

There were four grand performances of sacred music, by command of their Majesties, in Westminster Abbey this year, the profits of which were applied to the fund of the Royal Society of Musicians, Saint George's Hospital, and the Sons of the Clergy. They commenced on Monday the 29th of May. The band of vocal and instrumental performers amounted to eight hundred and six, exclusive of the principal singers, con-

sisting of twenty-two, with Madame Mara, Signor Rubinelli, Mr. Harrison, and Signor Morelli at their head.

Nothing could exceed the regularity observed in these performances. The King, who set the example, was in his box to a minute. Indeed I had for many years noticed, that when he commanded a play, or honoured a concert-room with his presence, he was always punctual, with the following solitary exception:—During the American war, in the year 1778, when party spirit was running high, the King commanded a play at Drury Lane Theatre. His Majesty being considerably beyond his time, some disapprobation was mingled with the applause of the audience on his *entrée*, and a fellow in the gallery had the audacity to call out—"Time!" The monarch, taking out his watch, and perceiving that he was late, graciously looked an acknowledgment of it, and made a dignified bow. This condescension on the part of the King excited such tumultuous applause, as had perhaps never before been witnessed in a theatre; and, could the offender have been discovered, he would no doubt have felt the force of public resentment.

A new and highly successful comic opera was produced at the Haymarket Theatre, on the 4th of August, intitled 'Incle and Yarico,' written by

George Colman, jun.; the music by Dr. Arnold. Edwin, that extraordinary singing actor, the founder of a new and admirable style, in his song, 'A clerk I was in London gay,' called forth a tumultuous encore. The music of this opera is natural, pleasing, and characteristic.

The King's Theatre opened for the season on the 8th of December, with a new comic opera by Paesiello, 'Il Re Teodora in Venezia,' under the direction of Mazzinghi. Signor Morelli, Signora Sestini, and Signora Storace sang and acted admirably. Storace was *encored* in the rondo, 'Care donne che tremate,' a pleasing trifle of her brother's, S. Storace the composer.

1788.

Signor Rubinelli and Madame Mara, having no engagements this season at the Italian Opera, and the two new singers not being expected till April, comic operas were given till the arrival of Signor Marchesi, a singer of great fame on the continent, and Signora Giuliani. The first comic opera, intitled 'La Locandiera,' was produced on the 15th of January: its music was composed by Cimarosa. This music is not perhaps the best of Cimarosa's efforts; but the admirable performance of Morelli and Storace made ample amends for every deficiency. Another new comic opera was

performed on the 4th of March, under the title of 'Le cameriere astute.' The music of this opera (the first of S. Storace) is elegant and pleasing. On Saturday the 5th of April, Signor Marchesi and Signora Giuliani made their first appearance in a new serious opera of Sarti's, 'Giulio Sabino.' Marchesi possessed a good and youthful figure; his voice (a soprano) was powerful, rich, and clear, and his style was elegant, and peculiarly his own. If his singing was a little too florid, his science and genius enabled him to display a continual variety which afforded high gratification. He was listened to with great attention, and was throughout the opera much applauded by an elegant and crowded audience. Signora Giuliani sang with great taste and expression.

The Oratorios, by command of their Majesties, at Tottenham Street, commenced on Friday the 8th of February, with Handel's 'Solomon.' Those at Drury Lane Theatre, under the direction of Mr. Linley, Dr. Arnold, and Madame Mara, began the same night. The singers were, Messrs. Reinhold, Dignum, Mrs. Crouch, Miss George, and Madame Mara. The concertos were performed by me on the oboe, and Mr. Mara on the violoncello. Mr. Mara in his performance displayed more rapidity than taste, and his attitude whilst playing was not very graceful. It gave

one the idea of a coachman on his box, in the act of driving. When the Maras were at Berlin, it came to the ear of Frederick the Great, at whose court they were retained, that Mara had lately beaten his wife with such violence, that she had been prevented from singing before his Majesty from a discoloured eye. On this the monarch sent for him, and rebuking him severely, told him, that as he was so fond of beating, he should be indulged in his propensity, and accordingly sent him as a drummer to one of his regiments for a month.

The professional concert commenced at the Hanover Square Rooms, on Monday, the 11th of February. Mr. Harrison and Mrs. Billington were the singers. The concertos were by Cramer on the violin, and Clementi on the piano-forte. Cramer displayed all that rich powerful tone, neat execution, and commanding style, which so eminently distinguished him; and Clementi that rapid and surprising execution which proved that he was truly ambidexter, his left hand keeping pace with his right in the most difficult passages. Without meaning to depreciate, it may be observed, that in cultivating the piano-forte two of the most difficult qualities to attain on other instruments are avoided. I mean, those of producing a fine tone and playing per-

fectly in tune. And it must be obvious to every one, that if the tone of the piano-forte is not in itself good, and that it is not well in tune, the performer cannot while playing on it, as on other instruments, render it otherwise; one quality depending on the maker, the other on the tuner of it. A piano-forte player, therefore, takes his instrument as a man takes a wife, "for better, for worse," depending on his judgment for the choice of a good one.

The professional concerts were allowed to be of the most perfect and gratifying kind, the band being composed of performers of the first talent in the kingdom, and the company of the most elegant description. At that period the head-dress of the gentlemen had assumed a preposterous appearance, the side curls reaching almost round the back of the head, and the toupee being extremely high and broad. Among the violin players at that concert there was an eccentric character named Hackwood, well known by the nobility, who, at the end of the first act, whilst amusing himself by making whimsical remarks, said to me,—"Do you see that gentleman on the fourth seat, with an enormous bushy head? That's Mr. Two-pee; and observe that little thin gentleman now coming up the room, with nine hairs on a side:—that's Mr. No-pee; and that's

his mahogany servant, a black, bringing his lady's shawl after them." This same Hackwood, whose society was much courted on account of his whimsicalities, had drank wine enough in his time to float a ship; notwithstanding which he lived to the age of ninety. He was particularly intimate with the late Sir C—r W—e, a Lincolnshire baronet of large fortune, who, when not laid up by the gout, was a three-bottle man. At a male party given by that gentleman Hackwood, who had important business to transact on the following morning early, hearing the clock strike one, arose to depart, on which Sir C—r said, "Hackwood, where are you going so soon?" "Home, sir," replied Hackwood; "it has struck *one!*"—"*One!*" said Sir C—r; "pooh, nonsense, what's one amongst so many? Sit down, sit down!" Hackwood, however, left the room, followed by the baronet, who swore they would at all events have a parting glass; and sending a servant for a bottle of Hollands gin, they drank it out between them, whilst taking leave at the head of the stairs.

This same Hackwood, though a man of considerable property, was as remarkable for his meanness as his eccentricities, as the following anecdote will show: After a concert some years ago at Apsley House, the mansion of the late

Earl Bathurst, (now the Duke of Wellington's,) in Piccadilly, when the musicians were departing, Mr. Dance said to Hackwood, "Which way are you going?" Hackwood, who had on that occasion played the violoncello, replied awkwardly—"I am not going your way."—"That is curious indeed," said Dance to a professional friend with him, "for there is not a house west of this in London." They therefore, knowing his avarice, watched Hackwood's coming out, which he presently did, dressed in an elegant suit of blue silk and silver; and to save the expense of a coach or a porter, with the large violoncello in its case, on his shoulder, having paraded with it through the hall, to the no small amusement of a multitude of footmen, several of whom had waited on him at the tables of their masters.

This season Madame Mara gave twelve subscription concerts at the Pantheon. The first took place on the 14th of April. The singers were Madame Mara, Mrs. Pieltain, (late Miss Chenu,) and Mr. Kelly. Raimondi led the band: Mara sang the recitative and air, 'Caro bene quest' addio,' with great beauty of voice and expression. Graeff and Fischer played concertos on the flute and oboe.

Vauxhall Gardens opened on the 15th of May, with a grand concert of vocal and instrumental

music. The songs, composed by Hook, were much applauded. The gardens had been greatly improved and beautified; and, for the first time, bands of horns and clarionets were stationed in various parts of them after the concert, to play whilst the company supped.

In conformity with old custom, the instrumental performers and the male singers employed at Vauxhall Gardens, had their summer dinner together at the Royal Oak tavern, near to Vauxhall turnpike. For this meeting the half of a buck had been purchased; but a particular circumstance occasioning the party to be postponed for two or three days, and the weather being very hot, the landlord of the tavern, who had benefited by the *march of intellect*, perceiving the venison to be on the go, advised that it be buried in the earth of his garden for a day or two, in order to stop the *march of putridity*. The haunch, notwithstanding, when placed on the dinner table, had assumed a beautiful emerald tint, and emitted a perfume, which, by an involuntary impulse, brought forth all the lavender, vinegarettes, and snuff-boxes of the company. Hook, who displayed as much execution on those instruments yclept a knife and fork, as on the keys of an organ, nothing daunted, fell to, and by the aid of that powerful auxiliary, sweet sauce, devoured at

least two pounds of it, and was not fit to converse with, except at a distance, for less than a week afterwards.

On the 16th of May, by command of their Majesties, and under the direction of the Earl of Exeter, honorary president, and the noble honorary vice-presidents, a selection from the works of Handel was performed in the Pantheon in the evening, for the benefit of the fund of the Royal Society of Musicians. The principal singers were Signor Marchesi and Mr. Harrison, Signora Storace and Madame Mara. Mr. Cramer led the band, which was composed of the members of the Royal Society.

At Covent Garden Theatre a new opera, in two acts, under the title of 'Marian,' was produced on the 22d of May. It was written by Mrs. Brook, author of 'Rosina.' The music of this piece, by Shield, is almost the sweetest he ever composed, particulary the quartet, 'Truth exalts the generous soul,' 'Patty Clover,' and the oboe song, sung by Mrs. Billington, accompanied by myself, "In which," said a critic, "the voice and instrument appeared each to be striving for pre-eminence."

When I was first engaged at Covent Garden Theatre, in the year 1783, Mr. Harris, the proprietor of it, being of a suspicious temper, and

possessing no knowledge of music, appeared to look coolly on me; in the idea of his doing so I became daily more confirmed. One morning at a rehearsal, he came on the stage close to the orchestra, and said he wished to speak to me when the rehearsal was ended. Vanity (although the public honoured me with great applause) not forming any part of my disposition, and considering my salary and situation agreeable, I thought, with regret, that he wished to get rid of me, and that matters were then coming to an *éclaircissement*. I however attended him, and was agreeably surprised by his taking me by the arm, and while traversing the stage, saying, "Mr. Parke, Mr. Linley, the proprietor and director of the music of Drury Lane Theatre, has been with me, to say, that as you removed from his theatre to mine, after the season had commenced, which is in opposition to their regulations, he shall, if your brother, Mr. John Parke (the first player of his day), leaves the situation of principal oboe there, insist on your going back to succeed him." This coming from so eminent a musician as Mr. Linley, dissipated the doubts of Mr. Harris, and mine too, particularly as he requested that I would give him my word that I would not under any circumstances leave him. This gratifying occurrence called forth an undeserved com-

pliment from a musical friend of eminence, who said in the words of the poet, " It is like a rich jewel in the possession of a fool, who has no idea of its value till he hears men of sense bid up for it." This same manager subsequently, at the rehearsal of an opera, objected strongly to a fine song of Paesiello, which Mrs. Mountain, a favourite singer, was very desirous of introducing into that piece, saying, " That song will not do; I don't like it; bring another with you to-morrow." When to-morrow came, however, she brought the same song, and her husband being the leader of the band, she had it played a note higher by the orchestral performers, which giving it a more sprightly character, Mr. Harris, who appeared to be much pleased with it, said to her, " Ay, that is quite the thing; it's worth ten of the other, and will do very well." Mrs. Mountain, like many other ladies who had gained their point, being quite elated, ran to the green-room, and in her lively manner, exclaimed to some of her female friends—" I have done it; I have hummed the manager nicely!" Mrs. Mountain's exultation, however, was imprudent, as it afterwards appeared that Mr. Harris had, by one of her " good-natured friends," been informed of her ingenious device, and she and her husband were shortly after dismissed from Covent Garden Theatre.

1789.

There was no New Year's Ode performed at St. James's this year, in consequence of his Majesty's severe illness, which cast a deep gloom over the whole nation. This gloom, however, was not of long duration, it being dissipated by the King's speedy and happy recovery; an event which diffused an universal joy throughout the kingdom. Under the delight which this circumstance afforded, the King's Theatre opened for the season, on the 10th of January, with a new comic opera, intitled 'La cosa rara,' in which Signora Graziani made her first appearance in England. She had a sweet voice and a handsome person, but her performance was not captivating. The music of this opera is one of Martini's most beautiful compositions. Martini died in the year 1784: he was originally a friar, and travelled some time in Asia; but it was not till his return that he entirely devoted himself to music. Marchesi, who had become very popular, came out this season in Cherubini's serious opera of 'Iffeginia in Aulide.' Marchesi exerted his rare talent to the admiration of the audience, who applauded him vehemently throughout the opera. Signora Giuliani, though not an efficient *prima donna*, sang and acted with much feeling. The first comic

female performer not having answered public expectation, Signora Storace was re-engaged, and appeared for the first time on the 11th of June, in Paesiello's comic opera 'Il Barbiere di Seviglia.' Storace, as Rosina, sang the airs, &c. with great taste and animation. She was ably supported by the spirit and humour of Signor Borselli, who made his first appearance as Figaro. These performances were unfortunately interrupted by a destructive fire, which totally consumed the King's Theatre on the 17th of June. In consequence of that calamity the proprietor gave the few remaining operas of the season at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, (that theatre having closed,) the first of which took place on the 2d of July, and the fourth and last on the 10th of the same month.

The professional concert commenced in Hanover Square on Monday the 2d of February: Marchesi and Mrs. Billington were the singers, and Cramer led the band. The concerto players were, Dance on the piano-forte, who displayed great taste and power of execution, and Cervetto on the violoncello, who, though he did not play with the fire and rapidity of Crosdill, could not be exceeded in delicacy and expression. On the second night I played a new concerto on the oboe, which I had composed expressly for the occasion. It was well

received, and was shortly after published. I dedicated it, by permission, to the Prince of Wales, who also permitted me to style myself musician to his Royal Highness. This work has still the honour to hold a place in the library of his most gracious Majesty.

The Sunday concerts commenced this season at the house of Lord H——n, where the two first were given; and his lordship having, according to custom, kept us playing till half-past two in the morning, and then suffered us to depart without any refreshments, some wag published an account of the former one in one of the daily newspapers, in which it was ludicrously observed, that it was to be feared some of the eminent musicians who had officiated on that occasion might be lost to the public through the surfeit his lordship's good cheer had occasioned them. Lord H——n, during the early part of the evening of the second concert, accused Hackwood, the violin player (with whom, on account of his oddities, he was intimate,) with being the author of the paragraph. Hackwood, in his whimsical manner, protested his total innocence of the affair, and at length perfectly satisfied his lordship by assuring him that he should be the last man in the world even to insinuate that he had, in the smallest degree inconvenienced his musical friends by his kindness. It appeared,

however, that the paragraph had some effect; for, when the concert was over, we were conducted by a footman in full-dress laced livery to the dining-parlour; on entering which we found, to our great surprise, another footman stirring up a large bowl of punch, brought to boiling heat; but no supper appeared. Had we tasted of this punch, and had afterwards plunged into the frost and snow which was waiting for us at the door, our deaths might have been the consequence. Whether his lordship intended this treat as the *amende honorable* for former neglect, or as a punishment for the appearance of the paragraph before-mentioned, it would be difficult to determine; but if we lost the honour of the former, we, by not tasting his caustic beverage, escaped the ill effects which probably would have resulted from the latter, and were thereby enabled to attend the following Sunday concert, which took place at the house of another of the *haut ton*, whose name I do not recollect. It is however fresh in my memory that there was a great number of fashionables present on that occasion, and that when the concert was ended we were invited to partake of a very good supper. Having, during the repast, taken two glasses of wine each, on Cramer (the leader) requesting a good-natured Irish footman to bring another bottle, he replied very civilly, "By my

faith, sir, and I wou'd, if there wasn't a bottle in the cellar, only I've been ordered not to let you have any more." This denial was perhaps dictated by prudence, for on the supper table of the hostess, in the adjoining room, which we were shown when leaving the house, there were placed (in February) at least three hundred pounds' worth of peaches, grapes, and strawberries! It was however, to use a vulgar phrase, " saving at the spigot to let it run out at the bung-hole."

Mrs. Billington, who had made an engagement for the season at Covent Garden Theatre on very high terms, commenced it on the 26th of January, in the comic opera of ' Inkle and Yarico.' In the character of Yarico, she introduced Handel's song ' Sweet bird,' (accompanied on the flute by me,) which was received with unbounded applause. Campley, Trudge, and Wowski, were admirably performed by Johnstone, Edwin, and Mrs. Martyr: this, together with the excellent singing of Mrs. Billington, proved a " Strong pull, a long pull, and a pull altogether," for it filled the house twice a week throughout the season. At the same theatre was represented, for the first time, on the 16th of March, a new pantomimic ballet, adapted from the French stage, called ' The Death of Captain Cook,' with the original French music, which is highly descriptive and ingenious. This

piece was well got up, and proved very successful. At one of the performances of this ballet an unfortunate accident occurred to an actor of the name of Ratchford. In the second part, where the savages attack Captain Cook's party, a general combat takes place, when, owing to the negligence of the property man, who had given out a real sword instead of a foil, Byrn, the author of the piece, who performed the part of the assailing chief, ran the person he was opposed to through the body. The wounded man, from the noise and confusion of the scene, could not make his misfortune known; but the blood soon beginning to flow, and his writhings of agony proclaiming it to the other performers, they, apparently in character, led him off the stage; whilst the audience were so unconscious of what had happened, that several persons in the pit exclaimed, "Bravo! bravo! Ratchford acts to-night as well as Garrick!" This poor man lingered some time before death put an end to his sufferings.

When I first went to Covent Garden Theatre, in the year 1783, some of the stage performers were much given to play, and hazard appeared to be their favourite game. On one occasion a very young gentleman, with whose elder brother I was intimately acquainted, having lost ten pounds, he was compelled to remain their debtor, there being

a sort of company of them, until the following evening, when, proceeding with the money to the usual haunt, no one of the set were there but old B—, who possessed none of the maculation of his brethren. The loser tendered the money, which, to his great surprise, B— refused to take, saying, "Put it into your pocket, for I won't touch a farthing of it." On the young man, the loser, observing, that others were connected with it besides himself, he replied, "Never mind that, put your cash into your pocket; you was *done!* *I* say you was *done!*" This was an instance of generosity as little to be expected from a gambler as a highwayman, and is rarely to be met with in the annals of gaming. An incident of a different kind, however, occurred a short time afterwards. A young gentleman, who held a highly respectable situation in a public office, had such a passion for play, that he seldom passed an evening without "shaking his elbow," as they termed it; and having been a great loser, in consequence perhaps of the arts practised by his adversaries, determined to bring himself home again by a *coup de main*. To effect this object he invited the whole of the party to dinner, amongst whom were Captain A——s, who perhaps, like Gibbet in the 'Beaux Stratagem,' assumed the appellation of "Captain" as a travelling name, Jem S——t, the celebrated

trumpet-player, (a pigeon,) J—k J——e, the Irish actor, (who boasted that he had amongst Mr. K——s set, a few nights before, won seventeen hundred pounds,) and several others; and bearing in mind the old proverb, "The better day the better deed," he fixed on a Sunday! On the appointed day, as soon as the meal was ended, their *dessert* (whipping) being superseded by a general cry for *bone soup* (dice), they set to with great avidity; and the donor of the feast appearing to be in high luck, winning every thing he played for, some of the party began to think that all was not right. Captain A——s, therefore, who was an old hand, seized one of the dice, and splitting it with the poker, exclaimed, "By Jasus, its loaded!" On this being proclaimed, a general scramble commenced for the money on the table, during which the candles were knocked down, and a scene of confusion prevailed, which could only be terminated by the interference of the watchmen, who like the good Catholics, dispensing their indulgences at a moderate price, prevented a disgraceful exhibition at Bow Street Police-office the following morning. At that time, as at present, there existed various grades of gamblers, the one before alluded to being, perhaps, of the second class; and were generally satisfied if they came off with five or ten pounds

each. But the order immediately above them aspired to hundreds, and, through their arts and collusions, were but too successful. If, however, as was sometimes the case, their dupes becoming acquainted with the unfair means they had used, refused to pay, a challenge was the consequence, and by making a pistol their arbitrator, they violated divine and human laws with equal daring. They however justified this mode by observing, that they could not collect their debts without it. Among this class of worthies were the well-known Jack T——n and the notorious Dick E——d. The former, a modest professor, being, in consequence of a night brawl, brought before the magistrate, Sir John Fielding, (brother to the popular author of that name,) at Bow Street, replied to the usual interrogatories in the following manner: "What is your name?"—"Jack T——n."—"How do you live?"—"Pretty well, your worship,—generally a joint and a pudding!" The latter, after a sporting dinner in the neighbourhood of Windsor, having inveigled Mr. R——s, an opulent young man, (a brewer,) into his snare, won of him, at the game of odd or even, 500*l.* Mr. R——s having been informed that he had been cheated, refused to pay the whole of the sum, but tendered 200*l.*; the consequence of which was a challenge from E——d. The

parties met, each attended by a second, when the 200*l.* were again proffered. The gambler, however, although he lowered his demand, insisted on having 300*l.* or his life. This not being acceded to, the monster E——d, who had obtained the first fire, shot his antagonist dead on the spot. The murderer, before the coroner's jury could pronounce the verdict of "wilful murder," fled to the continent, where, after several years had elapsed, a particular circumstance occurring, he was enabled to return to this country and again to disgrace the capital, by setting his unhallowed feet upon its pavements. The wretch E——d died a few years afterwards, as he had lived, despised and execrated.

The Lent performances commenced at Drury Lane Theatre on Friday the 27th of February, under the direction of Mr. Linley and Dr. Arnold, with a sacred Oratorio given for the first time, called 'Time and Truth.' The music was selected from the works of Handel, Purcell, Arne, Sacchini, &c., by Dr. Arnold. This oratorio is an assemblage of musical beauties, which reflects high credit on the selector's taste and talent. It went off in the best possible style. After the overture, a new prelude, on the happy recovery of his Majesty, was performed. It produced enthu-

siastic effect on the audience. At the end of the first part I executed a concerto on the oboe, and at the end of the second Madame Krumpholtz, from Paris, played, for the first time in England, a concerto on the pedal harp, in which she evinced rapid execution, elegant taste and expression, and was loudly applauded. Oratorios unexpectedly started up this season at Covent Garden Theatre at play-house prices. It should be mentioned here, that hitherto the prices of admission to the oratorios were nearly double those received at the ordinary theatrical performances, the charges being half a guinea for the boxes, five shillings for the pit, and three and two to the galleries. These performances were only given on the six Fridays in Lent, and were under the direction of Messrs. Harrison and Knyvett. The first was the 'Messiah,' sung by Mr. Harrison, Miss Cantelo, and others from the concerts of ancient music, and Signora Storace. The leader was Mr. Richards, and Mr. Knyvett presided at the organ. At the end of the second part Madame Gautherot, from Paris, performed, for the first time in England, a concerto on the violin with great ability. The ear, however, was more gratified than the eye by this lady's masculine effort.

Vauxhall Gardens opened on the 19th of May,

with a grand gala, on the happy recovery of the King, in which every possible demonstration of loyalty and affection took place.

At the Hay Market Theatre, (Colman's,) a new play, intitled ' The Battle of Hexham,' written by G. Colman, jun., was produced on the 11th of August; the music by Dr. Arnold. The overture and the airs were generally excellent, and the comic song ' Alteration,' a parody on the four-and-twenty fiddlers all on a row, sung by Edwin, was one of the best specimens of comic singing and acting ever witnessed on any stage. It was loudly encored. This piece proved eminently successful.

In the month of September I attended the music parties of his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland during a week, at his lodge in Windsor great park, where I met Mr. Shield, Mr. Waterhouse, the Duke's musical page, Mr. Blake, and Mr. Baumgarten. Our mornings were passed *ad libitum*, and the evenings in executing the fine music of Mr. Baumgarten, which had been composed expressly for the Duke. On one of the evenings the Prince of Wales arrived from Brighton to dinner with his royal uncle. After they had dined we performed some of our usual quartets and quintets; and the Prince being afterwards inclined to sing a part in a glee, he selected

the one from the opera of ' The Flitch of Bacon,' beginning with the words ' How shall we mortals spend our hours,' which was sung by his Royal Highness, Mr. Shield, and me.

The following whimsical circumstance occurred whilst I remained at Windsor: Mr. Baumgarten being a great eater, Messrs. Waterhouse, Shield, Blake, and myself, in order to form some idea of the quantity he consumed at a meal, proposed in sport, during a morning walk, that we should all be weighed, which being agreed to, and the apparatus at hand, was soon accomplished; and memoranda were made of the different weights. After dinner during another walk, purposely brought about, we were all weighed again, when it appeared that Mr. Baumgarten was eight pounds heavier after than before dinner!

The grand music meeting at Manchester commenced on the 2nd of September. At the head of the vocalists were, Mr. Harrison and Mrs. Billington, and of the instrumentals, Cramer, Parke, the elder, and Madame Krumpholtz, who were severally effective in their solos. Harrison and Mrs. Billington sang with their usual excellence, and the whole of the performances went off with the greatest eclat. At this meeting Parke, my brother, and another professor had lodgings provided for them in the

house of a respectable widow woman in Manchester, who undertook to provide their meals for them. On the first day, a fine shoulder of mutton made its appearance at dinner, which they highly extolled in the presence of the hostess. At night, after the concert was ended, they returned home to supper, and another smoking hot shoulder of mutton being placed on the table, Parke said good-humouredly, "What! another shoulder of mutton!" on which the old lady artlessly replied, "Yes, sir; as you liked that at dinner so well, I was determined you should have another for supper." The old lady perhaps had kept in mind the old adage, "One shoulder of mutton drives down another."

The comic opera called 'The Haunted Tower,' the music of which was composed and compiled by S. Storace, was first brought out at Drury Lane Theatre on the 24th of November. The principal singers in it were Mr. Kelly, Mr. Bannister, jun., Mrs. Crouch, and Signora Storace, sister to the composer, this being her first attempt on the English stage. Signora Storace sang with chasteness and expression; her animation was great without being excessive, and she had as much execution as was requisite for the line which nature seemed to have marked out for. The success of this opera was almost unbounded. The

copy-right of its music, which was uncommonly effective and universally admired, was sold for the sum of five hundred pounds!

1790.

The new year's ode, by Dr. Parsons, was, as usual, performed at St. James's in the presence of his Majesty.

The Italian operas were represented this season at Colman's little theatre in the Hay Market. They commenced on the 16th of January, with a new comic opera intitled, 'I due Castellani,' the music of which was composed by Fabrizzi. Giardini was director. In this opera Signora Laurenti, pupil of Giardini, and Signor Negri, made their first appearance in England. Signor Negri's voice was good, and he sang with spirit, but his acting was but indifferent. The voice of Signora Laurenti wanted power. Her air, 'Tenerino e tutto amore,' was, however, very prettily sung. The music of this opera, though it has merit, will not rank as a first-rate effort.

If the comic opera was defective, the serious opera made ample amends, having the powerful aid of Marchesi and Madame Mara, who commenced for the season on the 13th of April, in a new serious opera, called 'L'Usurpator Innocente.' The music was by Federici. The union of such

exalted powers as those of Marchesi and Mara rendered this opera a delectable treat. To make way for the usual summer performances at the little theatre in the Hay Market, the Italian opera was again removed to Covent Garden Theatre, where was presented, on the 12th of June, the serious opera 'Andromache,' and on Tuesday the 17th of July, the season closed with 'L' Usurpator Innocente,' in which Marchesi performed for the last time in this country. At the end of the operatic season, when Marchesi was about to depart for the continent, he was arrested by "mine host" of the house in which he had lodged, for the amount of his board for the season; to be furnished with which, for three seasons, together with his lodging, formed a part of his engagement with Sir John Gallini, *ci-devant maître de danse*, then proprietor of the King's Theatre. That Sir John, having settled for Marchesi's lodging, should demur at paying for his board, appeared rather extraordinary. He was not probably aware that the signor's powers of deglutition equalled his surprising powers of song; and therefore considered that it would not be unjust to cut off his table for the last season, in order to make up for the more than *quantum sufficit* he had consumed during the two former.

But supposing Sir John, cameleon like, preferred living on air, it did not necessarily follow that the signor should be satisfied with such unsubstantial diet. The affair, however, by the intervention of friends, was soon adjusted, and the signor departed. Sir John Gallini was not the only manager of the King's Theatre who had directed it on a saving plan. He was infinitely exceeded by Y—s, one of his predecessors, whose parsimony was hyperbolically described by a wag in the following manner: "This dwarf-like manager, who had an eye to every thing, going his morning round in the theatre, came to a hogshead containing lamp oil, which being nearly empty, he, in order to guage it to a nicety, leaned over the brim so far that he fell into it, and was, from its depth, unable to extricate himself. His cries for help, however, bringing one of the lamp-lighters to his assistance, he, with his usual thrift, desired the fellow who took him out to hang him by his clothes on the large wooden peg above the cask, till the whole of the oil should have dripped from them!"

The professional concert commenced at the Hanover Square rooms on Monday, the 15th of February, and the concert of ancient music, honoured by the presence of their Majesties, at

Tottenham Street, on the 4th of February. The first of the Sunday concerts was this year held at the Duchess of Bolton's, on the site of Russell Square.

Mr. Incledon, who had for a few seasons sung with great success at Vauxhall Gardens, and the Theatre Royal Bath, appeared for the first time at Covent Garden Theatre on the 20th of January, in the part of Dermot in the 'Poor Soldier,' when his fine tenor voice and its perfect intonation gained him universal applause. On the 19th of February Mrs. Billington performed for her own benefit at the same theatre, for the first time in the character of Eliza, in the musical afterpiece of 'The Flitch of Bacon.' It had been considered by many that she was merely a bravura singer, and therefore perhaps she selected this character to prove that she could sing with effect in simple and plaintive melodies. If this was her object, she attained it completely, by singing the natural and plaintive music of the part in the most chaste and beautiful style imaginable. This favourite piece was first brought out at Colman's theatre in the Hay Market, in 1778. It was the first opera composed by Mr. Shield. It had a long run; and 'The Flitch of Bacon' is to this day as much relished as ever.

A curious musical contest took place during the preceding summer in Ireland, between Mrs. Bil-

lington and Miss George, who had a voice of such extent, that she sang up to B in alto perfectly clear, and in tune; this being three notes higher than any singer I ever heard. Mrs. Billington, who was engaged on very high terms for a limited number of nights, made her first appearance on the Dublin stage in the character of Polly, in the 'Beggar's Opera,' surrounded by her halo of popularity. She was received with acclamation, and sang her songs delightfully, particularly 'Cease your funning,' which was tumultuously encored. Miss George, who performed the part of Lucy, (an uphill singing part,) perceiving she had little chance of dividing the applause with the great magnet of the night, had recourse to the following stratagem: when the dialogue duet in the second act, 'Why, how now, Madame Flirt,' came on, Mrs. Billington gave her verse with great sweetness and characteristic expression, and was much applauded. Miss George in reply, availing herself of her extraordinary compass of voice, and setting propriety at defiance, sang the whole of her verse an octave higher, her tones having the effect of the high notes of a sweet and brilliant flute: the audience, taken by surprise, bestowed on her such loud applause as almost shook the walls of the theatre, and an unanimous *encore* was the result.

There were oratorios this season at both the winter theatres. Those at Drury Lane Theatre began on Friday the 19th of February, with the 'Messiah,' which was admirably sung by Messrs. Reinhold and Kelly, Mrs. Crouch and Signora Storace. Concertos were performed on the oboe by me, and on the violin, for the first time, by Master Bridgtower, son of an African prince, who was attended by his father, habited in the costume of his country. The youth displayed considerable ability, and was much applauded.

The Covent Garden oratorios also commenced on the same evening with the 'Messiah,' which was equally well sung by Mr. Harrison, Miss Poole, (afterwards Mrs. Dickons,) Miss Cantelo, &c. &c. The concertos were by Clementi on the piano-forte, and Madame Gautherot on the violin. It is said by fabulous writers that Minerva happening to look into the stream whilst playing her favourite instrument, the flute, perceiving the distortion of countenance it occasioned, was so much disgusted that she cast it away, and dashed it to pieces. Although I would not recommend to any lady playing on a valuable Cremona fiddle to follow the example of the goddess, yet it strikes me that if she is desirous of enrapturing her audience, she should display her talent in a situa-

tion where there is only just light enough to make "darkness visible."

In the winter of this year I was introduced to the Turkish ambassador, the first ever received in England, at his house on the Adelphi Terrace. I proceeded there about eleven o'clock, A. M., to breakfast with his excellency, and after some conversation on various subjects, through his interpreter, coffee was brought by two domestics, habited in eastern costume, having richly embroidered dresses, and daggers in their girdles. The coffee was served in the most beautiful small china cups, without saucers, I had ever seen, and was succeeded by long Turkish pipes, filled with tobacco, which, as we sat upon stools, rested on the carpet. Although I was wholly unaccustomed to smoking, as it would have been a violation of etiquette to refuse, I took one and appeared to use it, which answered the purpose. When I had taken leave of the ambassador, I was shown the room where all the principal persons composing his suite were at dinner. They consisted of Turks, Armenians, and Greeks, and were seated, in dresses of various kinds, on a rich Persian carpet, eating from their plates or dishes, their meat being ready cut for them, with their fingers. The sight was novel and pleasing, and gave me

the idea of a set of coloured men ranged on a chess-board! This same ambassador was very intimate with a family I visited, and frequently dined at their table. On one of those occasions his excellency, who was forbid by the Koran to drink wine, found an admirable substitute in porter; and as Mahomet, for obvious reasons, had not interdicted the use of that wholesome beverage, he drank very freely of it. In the evening, when the rest of the party were engaged at the card-tables, and his excellency, who knew a little English, was reclining on a sofa, he suddenly and vehemently exclaimed "Watare! watare!—ah! watare!" The ladies appeared to be much embarrassed, and the gentlemen, scarcely able to suppress a laugh, stared with surprise. The ambassador, however, continued crying out, "watare!" till his interpreter going to him, ascertained that he only wanted a glass of water to allay the thirst occasioned by the libations he had offered at the shrine of Messrs. Barclay and Perkins!

A new musical entertainment, in two acts, intitled 'No Song no Supper,' was performed at Drury Lane Theatre on the 26th of April. The music was composed and compiled by S. Storace. In this piece, which became very popular, Signora Storace produced great effect. Her ballad, 'With

plaintive suit,' (the melody taken from an old street ditty,) she sang so admirably, as to be honoured with an unanimous encore. The trio and the finale in the first act are masterly compositions.

The commemoration musical performances were this year resumed in Westminster Abbey, by command and under the usual patronage of their Majesties. They consisted of four; the first took place on Wednesday the 26th of May. The singers were Signor Pacchierotti, Madame Mara, Signora Storace, &c. &c. Cramer led the band, and Mr. Bates presided at the organ. The profits were applied, as in the former instances, to charitable purposes. At the first rehearsal two thousand one hundred and twenty-nine half-guineas were taken at the doors; the price of admission being half-a-guinea. This year the Royal Society of Musicians was incorporated.

Vauxhall Gardens opened for the season on the 29th of May, with a superbly illuminated gala. The Duke of York's military band played between the acts, and at the end of the concert, for the first time.

Her Majesty Queen Charlotte, in the summer of this year, gave a grand fête at her cottage at Frogmore, to the Princesses and a large portion of the nobility and gentry. A concert forming part of the entertainments, Mrs. Kennedy of

Covent Garden Theatre was commanded to sing in it. It should be observed, that Mrs. Kennedy had some time previously been so much indisposed as to find it necessary to call in a physician; her husband, a well-known doctor, having too much affection for his wife to prescribe for her himself. The physician, consistently with the nature of her complaint, prescribed for her warm brandy and water, with a little sugar in it of course; and her malady proving of rather long duration, that which she in the first instance took *medicinally*, afterwards, by the force of habit, became *constitutional*. When the morning rehearsal of the concert took place Mrs. Kennedy's nerves were in such a state of relaxation as made her singing painful to herself and distressing to those who heard her. She, however, having had her nerves braced up, drum-proof, by a good dinner and so forth, made ample amends at the performance in the evening, by evincing all that richness of tone and perfect intonation which had so eminently distinguished her. His Majesty, an excellent judge, being much surprised and pleased at the difference, observed, good-humouredly, "Though Mrs. Kennedy cannot sing well in the morning, she performs admirably after dinner." This reminds me of a circumstance which occurred in the preceding year: having called on that celebrated musician, Doctor Arnold, at his

house in Duke Street, Westminster, our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Mr. A——y, the organ-builder, a man of irregular habits, who came on business. "How do you do, Mr. A——y?" said the Doctor. "Very well, I thank you, Doctor," replied the organ-builder. "And how do you get on now?" added the Doctor. "Oh," said Mr. A——y, "very well. I work hard all day, and go to bed happy at night."—"Ay," said the Doctor, "we can all go to bed happy, but the test is how we arise in the morning!"

Music experienced an almost irreparable loss by the death of its distinguished patron, his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland, on the 18th of September. In the early part of that month I received a letter from Mr. Waterhouse, principal page to the Duke, desiring me to attend his Royal Highness at Windsor, on Monday the 13th; and two days afterwards another, countermanding the former, and appointing me to be at Cumberland House, Pall Mall, on the evening of the 18th. In the middle of the latter day, however, I learned that his Royal Highness had expired early that morning. During the delirium which preceded the dissolution of the Duke, his partiality to his favourite pursuits, hunting and music, was very conspicuous, sometimes appearing in the act of urging on the hounds, and occasionally inquiring

if Shield and William Parke were come. The royal remains, after lying in state the usual time, were interred with great pomp, in Henry the Seventh's chapel in Westminster Abbey.

1791.

Owing to circumstances which shall be explained hereafter, the representation of Italian operas did not take place this season at the King's Theatre. The first stage musical performances of moment were therefore given at our national theatres; and Drury Lane taking the lead, produced, on the 1st of January, a new comic opera, in three acts, called 'The Siege of Belgrade,' the music principally by S. Storace, with a few pieces selected from Martini, Saliezi, and Paesiello. In it Signora Storace appeared with increased effect, and 'The Siege of Belgrade' was followed up like a new fashion. Messrs. Kelly, Bannister, jun., and Mrs. Crouch, three distinguished favourites, appeared in it. This opera presented a marked instance of the rapid transition which the English opera had made, from the simplicity of the ballad farce to the captivating splendours of the Italian drama. The music, which was excellent throughout, procured the author for his copy-right one thousand pounds. 'The Siege of Belgrade' was followed by the new

comic opera of the 'Woodman,' brought out at Covent Garden Theatre on the 26th of February. The music was composed by Mr. Shield, and is of a very superior description. The beautiful ballad 'The streamlet,' charmingly sung by Incledon, was universally encored. The glee, 'What is love,' and the song, 'Much more a helpless woman,' so feelingly given by the elder Bannister, are admirable specimens of science, taste, and nature. Miss Poole made her *début* in this opera in the character of Emily with great success, and in her acting as well as singing gave promise of future excellence. In the first movement of the overture the composer introduced, very appropriately, a solo for the bugle-horn, and the adagio and the difficult rondo were entirely obligato for me on the oboe. The author (the Reverend H. Bate Dudley) judiciously availing himself of the rage for archery which then prevailed, even amongst the ladies, introduced a scene of that description in the third act, which, together with the whole of the opera, went off with unbounded applause.

After a late rehearsal of this opera I went with Incledon, the popular singer, to dine at an ordinary at a coffee-house in Bow Street, Covent Garden. The charge for dinner was half a crown, and it was understood that each person was expected to

spend not less than a shilling in wine, it being then less than half the present price, or punch, afterwards. One of the party on that day was an elderly half-pay captain of horse, who occasionally dined there, and who eat so much like a horse in quantity, that the landlady wished him, when he came, any where but at her table. The dinner was excellent, and the conversation agreeable, particularly on the part of the son of Mars, who, after dinner, conscious of being an unwelcome guest, on the mistress of the house, who had headed the table, being about to leave the room, addressing her, he said, with great good humour, "Now, Mrs. F——r, if you will make me a shilling's worth of punch, very strong, and a good deal of it, I will promise you that I will not dine here again for a fortnight!" Public ordinaries had been infinitely more general twenty years before the time I have alluded to, particularly in the villages round London, whither the inducement of a walk occasioned the tables of houses so situated to be numerously attended, and the profits, provided the visitants brought with them moderate appetites, were considerable. A relation of mine, when a young man, was so partial to those excursions, that in fine weather he scarcely ever missed going with two bachelors, like himself, to dine at a Sunday ordinary at Chelsea. One of

the three, however, being an enormous eater, the landlord, though he had not as many eyes as Argus, had clearly seen the devastation he made amongst his eatables, and was therefore determined that he should not again over-eat himself at his expense. On the following Sabbath they went as usual, and found, contrary to custom, the door closed; but, on knocking two or three times, the landlord made his appearance, and casting a hawk's eye at the gentleman with the stomach, said,—"Gentlemen, we have no public dinner to-day!" The party knowing this to be a mere trick, determined to play mine host one in return. They therefore, on the next Sunday, proceeded to Chelsea at the usual time, and when within a hundred yards of the house where the ordinary was held, the gentleman with the stomach, according to a preconcerted plan, bound up his jaw with a white handkerchief, and, rubbing his powder-puff over his face, made a sickly and disconsolate appearance. They again found the door closed; but on its being opened to them, the landlord perceiving the gentleman with the stomach looking so woebegone, and his jaw tied up, saluted them most cordially, and immediately ushered them into the dining-room, where the dinner had been just placed on the table. After having hung up their hats, and taken their seats, on the gentleman with the

stomach wiping the powder off his face, and taking the handkerchief from his jaw, the landlord, struck with astonishment and shame, bolted out of the room, and was not seen again afterwards!

Charles Dibdin gave, with great success, at the Lyceum Theatre, a musical performance on a new plan, consisting of songs, recitations, &c., intitled 'Ways and Oddities.' This little theatre had hitherto been used only as a private one.

The King's Theatre having been rebuilt in a very superb style, could not however be opened in consequence of the serious misunderstanding which had arisen between the Lord Chamberlain, supported by a large portion of the nobility, and the proprietor of it. The performance of Italian operas was therefore suspended at that house: but the Pantheon being converted into an elegant and spacious theatre, and, by permission of his Majesty, styled 'The King's Theatre,' was first opened on Saturday the 19th of February, under the direction of Mr. O'Reily, with the serious opera of 'Armide;' the music of which was composed by the celebrated Sacchini. Signor Pacchierotti and Madame Mara sang in this opera in the first style of excellence. Besides these two popular performers, there were engaged for the comic opera, Signora Casentini, Signor Lepparelli,

and Signor Morelli. The band was led by Cramer. Signor Borghi was the director. I was invited by the latter to take a seat in the orchestra; but I declined the offer. The second opera produced was on Tuesday the 22nd of February, when was performed, by command of their Majesties, the comic opera of 'La Bella Pescatrice,' the music of which was by Giuglielmi. The house was thinly attended on that occasion. In this opera Signora Casentini and Morelli sang and acted with great spirit and effect. These and Sarti's beautiful opera, 'Idalide,' in which Pacchierotti and Mara afforded high gratification, were given throughout the season. The proprietor of the King's Theatre not having been aware, perhaps, of the opposition at the Pantheon proving so formidable, had, at a great expense, engaged performers for his establishment; but his license being withheld, on the 26th of March he opened the King's Theatre with entertainments of singing and dancing, according to law; viz. the music of the operas which he had prepared was gone through without action, with ballets as usual. The principal singers he had retained were, Signor Tajano, Albertarelli, and David, the latter of whom possessed a clear and flexible voice, with an extensive falsetto, and an elegant expressive style. Madame Capaletto, Madame Lopps, and Madame Sestini, were the

principal female vocalists. These operatic hostilities were very injurious to both parties, and continued longer than was at first expected, as will be seen hereafter. The violent contentions between the Italian theatres causing them both to be thinly attended, benefited the other musical performances considerably; and the oratorios at both our theatres had numerous audiences. The vocal corps at Covent Garden Theatre, in addition to Harrison, Bartleman, an excellent bass singer, Knyvett, Miss Poole, &c. possessed that tower of strength, Mrs. Billington. At Drury Lane Theatre the singers were, Messrs. Reinhold, Bellamy, jun., Dignum, Mrs. Crouch, and Miss Cicilia Davis, or Inglesina, the name by which she had been known on the continent, as well as at the King's Theatre, Hay Market. This lady had received her musical education in Italy. Her success, however, was not so complete as to prove that by sending a lady to study in Italy she must necessarily come back an accomplished singer, any more than the act of sending a youth to college ensures his returning an enlightened scholar. At these performances Dussek and myself were engaged to play concertos on the piano-forte and oboe. Mr. Shaw led the band, and Mr. Linley presided at the organ.

The professional concert commenced in Hanover

Square on Monday the 7th of February. Pacchierotti and Mrs. Billington sang divinely. Clementi, in a sonata on the piano-forte, astonished the audience by his execution; and the elder Parke, in an oboe-concerto, displayed great power and brilliancy. On the following night I performed a concerto on the oboe, and Mr. J. Parkinson gave another on the bassoon. Parkinson had great and neat execution, and his tone was remarkably sweet, having none of that nasal quality which occasioned a medical friend of mine to observe, that the upper notes of the bassoon, in general, appeared to him like a hautboy labouring under a cold.

It had been the custom for some years to distinguish amateur performers from professional, by giving the former the appellation of gentlemen players. This had become so general, that in a party where I dined, a gentleman being asked his opinion of the musical ability of Lord C——, (who was a very indifferent violin player,) replied,—"His lordship, I can assure you, sir, plays in a very gentlemanly-like manner." Parkinson, who had studied the bassoon so much, that he had quite neglected the graces, had a rough exterior, and was by no means polished in his manners. Being engaged to perform at a musical meeting at Yarmouth, and finding the town extremely full of

company, he was under the necessity of taking up his abode for the week at a small public house in the suburbs. Having an hour to spare on the evening after his arrival, Parkinson amused himself up stairs in his room by practising the bassoon. The landlord of the house, who was a musician in the county militia, returning home at the time, and hearing the bassoon so finely played, said to his wife with astonishment,—"Who is that playing?"—"Oh," said she, "it is only the gentleman."—"Pooh, pooh, nonsense," said he, "that's no gentleman I am sure!"

Salomon gave twelve subscription-concerts in Hanover Square, which began on the 12th of March. These concerts had the powerful aid of the celebrated composer Haydn, who was engaged by Salomon to come to London and compose twelve new symphonies, one for each night, and to preside at the piano-forte during the performance of them, for which he was to receive a thousand pounds. These symphonies, which afforded universal gratification, were afterwards published by Salomon, the proprietor of them; and the popular 'Surprise' and military symphonies were parts of them. The singers engaged at these concerts were Signor David, Miss Abrams, and Signora Storace. The solos were by Salomon, the leader on the violin, and J. B. Cramer on the piano-forte. The

performance of the latter was much admired for the elegance of its style and brilliancy of its execution.

The Sunday concerts commenced on the 19th of February at the Earl of Chesterfield's. On that occasion there was an unusual influx of company, owing, it was thought, to his lordship being honoured with the presence of the Right Honourable William Pitt, premier of England. During this concert Cramer executed a concerto on the violin, and I one on the oboe, both of which were flatteringly attended to by the elegant auditors. Speaking of Mr. Pitt, reminds me of the following anecdote, related to me by a military friend, who took his son (a boy from school, of nine years old,) into the gallery of the House of Commons to hear the debates. When Mr. Fox had spoken, the boy asked his father who that was, and was answered, that it was Mr. Fox; and on Mr. Burke having ended his speech, and a similar interrogatory ensuing, the father replied, that it was Mr. Burke. At length Mr. Pitt arose, and having, in his all-powerful and commanding style, delivered a luminous speech, the boy, with great energy, said, "Father! who is that?" and on being informed that it was Mr. Pitt, "Oh," said he, "I suppose he's the master of them all!"

When this concert was ended, Lord Chesterfield

informed those who had played in it, that a supper was prepared for us, and that he regretted that he, on account of his house being so full of company, could not be with us. In about ten minutes or so afterwards the supper was placed on the table; the principal feature of which was a fine large boiled leg of mutton and turnips, such as are usually provided for the college youths, after having rung a peal of triple bobs! The loaves and fishes were of course reserved for the ministers. When we considered the grandeur of the mansion in which we were entertained, and the well-known liberality of the noble owner of it, we could not for a moment believe that we had partaken of a supper of his lordship's ordering; and suspecting that the cook had displayed his own taste in it, we subsequently ascertained, through Hackwood, the eccentric violin player, who dined one day with the peer and another with his butler, that Lord Chesterfield had ordered a handsome supper to be prepared for us; and that the cook, having himself a great predilection for a boiled leg of mutton and turnips, thought he had strictly obeyed his lord's orders by placing before us that glorious dish. That this joint, next in rank, perhaps, to the famed English sirloin, is by many greatly admired, is undoubted. While travelling in Yorkshire, five years ago, I had a whimsical

proof of this by a gentleman in the coach, whenever he came to a field of turnips, exclaiming in a sort of ecstasy,—"Ah, there they are, those beautiful appendages of a boiled leg of mutton!" On the occasion before-mentioned, we supped in the great dining parlour of Chesterfield House, in which stood the massy silver font, one of the largest and most curiously-wrought pieces of old plate in England. This superb and valuable article was, many years ago, nearly lost for ever to the noble owner of it by the following stratagem:—It becoming known to some villains that Lord Chesterfield had given directions to his goldsmith to send for it for alterations during his absence from London in the summer, two regular porters, with their horse for conveying goods safely, came to Chesterfield House with a note, purporting to be from the goldsmith, desiring the font to be sent to him by the bearers; and the servants having received instructions to that effect, delivered it to them. This fraud being presently discovered by the goldsmith himself calling, Lord Chesterfield sought the advice of a certain magistrate, by whose direction it was advertised in the daily newspapers, with the offer of a reward of one hundred pounds, and a promise that no questions should be asked. The font, by this advice, was brought back to Chesterfield House by the identical porters

who had taken it away, and who, on delivering it, received the reward!

This year, by command of their Majesties, there were four grand performances of sacred music, selected from the works of Handel, in Westminster Abbey, the profits of which were, as before, applied to charitable purposes. These performances were on a more extended scale than in any of the former years, the orchestra consisting of a thousand performers. The days of performance were Monday the 23rd, Thursday the 26th, Saturday the 28th of May, and Wednesday the 1st of June. The principal singers were, Signor Pacchierotti, Signor David, Signora Storace, Mrs. Crouch, and Madame Mara. Cramer led the band, and Mr. Bates presided at the organ. The abbey presented a scene of uncommon splendour. The several royal suites were so disposed as to give a dignified display of the British court, united with the brilliant assemblage of the most beautiful and fashionable women of the Island, ranged throughout the different galleries, &c. The whole afforded a gratifying and striking *coup d'œil.*

Vauxhall Gardens opened for the season on the 25th of May, with a grand concert, in which the songs composed by Mr. Hook, and the neatly-performed concerto on the violin, by Mr. Pieltain, the leader, were much applauded.

The Pantheon Opera House opened for the season on Saturday the 31st of December, under the direction of Monsieur Trancart, with the comic opera of 'La Pastorella Nobile.' Signora Casentini and Signor Morelli performed with great animation and effect to a remarkably thin audience.

Pacchierotti and Madame Mara having seceded, none but comic operas were performed at the Pantheon; therefore the opera of 'La Pastorella Nobile' was repeated on the 7th of January to almost empty benches. On the night of the following Friday that new and elegant theatre, on which so much money had lately been expended, was reduced by fire to a heap of ruins! The performances were, in consequence of that disaster, removed to the little theatre in the Hay Market, where, on the 14th of February, a new comic opera was produced, called 'La Locanda,' in which Casentini and Signor Lazzarini, sang to a miserably thin house. Other comic operas were brought forward with so little success, that the undertaking was abandoned at the expiration of the season.

This winter I was engaged by Miss Abrams for a series of concerts denominated the ladies' concerts, conducted by that lady at Lord Vernon's, in which I performed a concerto on the oboe, and

some of Handel's music, which were greatly applauded by the elegant auditors. Mr. Harrison sang the favourite song composed by S. Webbe, 'The Rose;' and Miss Abrams Paesiello's beautiful air 'Madamina,' with great taste. Miss Abrams first appeared before the public at Drury Lane Theatre in the early part of the year 1776, in a new operatic piece in one act, called 'May-day, or the Little Gipsy,' written by David Garrick; the music by Dr. Arne, whose pupil she was. The physical powers of Miss Abrams were not great, but she sang with much sweetness and delicacy. During the last rehearsal of this piece, on the morning of the day it came out, Garrick, suddenly conceiving that a dance of rustics would improve it, communicated his idea to Dr. Arne; adding, "I suppose it would be impossible for you to compose a tune for it in time?" The Dr. smiling, and rubbing his elbow, according to his usual practice, replied, "We'll see what can be done;" and, calling for pen, ink, and music paper, sat down at the prompter's table, and in less than five minutes produced one of the prettiest dancing tunes I ever heard, which, when played by the band, astonished and delighted Garrick so much, that, forgetting his age, he ran up to the Doctor, and, embracing, took him by the hands and danced with him round the stage with much

grace and animation, to the admiration of all who witnessed it. Dr. Arne did not long survive the production of 'May-day, or the Little Gipsy.' He died on the 5th of March in the year 1778. He was a voluminous writer, having composed and arranged upwards of forty pieces for the stage, besides songs, glees, &c., almost out of number. His excellent music to Milton's 'Mask of Comus' was composed in 1738; and twenty-four years afterwards, 1762, he produced his *chef d'œuvre*, the opera of 'Artaxerxes,' in which his famous pupil, Miss Brent, was the original Mandane. Dr. Arne, who was rather an eccentric man, derived great profit from that lady's exertions, till she married Mr. Pinto, the celebrated violin player, who led the band at Vauxhall Gardens. When that event took place, the Doctor thereby losing a considerable portion of her salary, was so much incensed, that on a gentleman speaking of her to him, he exclaimed with much warmth, "O, sir, pray don't name her;—she has married a fiddler!"

The manner of Dr. Arne's death was very singular. The day after his decease his intimate friend, Vernon, the favourite singing actor of Drury Lane Theatre, came into the music room, and in my presence described it as follows: "I was talking on the subject of music with the Doc-

tor, who suffered much from exhaustion, when, in attempting to illustrate what he had advanced, he in a very feeble and tremulous voice sung part of an air, during which he became progressively more faint, until he breathed his last! making, as our immortal Shakspeare expresses it, 'a swan-like end, fading in music.'"

To return to 1792. A new subscription concert for eight nights was given this season by Messrs. Harrison and Knyvett, called 'The vocal concert,' which, in accordance with its title, consisted of vocal music only. The singers were, Mr. Harrison, Mrs. Harrison, Mr. Knyvett, Mr. Barthelemon, &c. The professional concert commenced on Monday the 13th of February. Pleyel the composer was engaged to come to England, and to write twelve pieces, one for each night, and to direct them at the piano-forte. This man, after his arrival, in direct violation of his contract, by which he was to receive a thousand pounds, could not be satisfied but by an increase of terms!!! His music, however, evinced originality, and was productive of great effect. Mr. Yaniewicz played a concerto on the violin in an elegant and finished style, and received frequent plaudits. The Prince of Wales was, as usual, at the head of the subscribers. Salomon, who had again the aid of Haydn's transcendent talents, began his concerts

at the same rooms on Friday the 17th of February. The Sunday concerts commenced at Lord Hampden's, where, in the presence of an immense assemblage of rank and fashion, we played till half-past two in the morning! When the concert was over, Lord Hampden said to Hackwood, the eccentric violin player, "Hackwood, will you stay and sup with us?" To which Hackwood replied, "No, my lord, I can't," taking out his watch, "for I think my wife must be waiting breakfast for me."

Ranelagh opened on the 14th of February with a grand concert of vocal and instrumental music, under the patronage of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

This year oratorios were given at the King's Theatre. They were styled 'The Professional Oratorios,' and were managed by a committee, consisting of Dr. Arnold, the conductor; Mr. Shaw, the leader; and myself, the principal oboe. The singers were, Mr. Harrison and Mrs. Harrison, Master Welsh, Mr. Dignum, Signor Morelli, &c. These performances were well attended, till our opponent, I presume, revived and circulated the report which had been prevalent during the former season, that the Opera House was in danger of falling. This had the effect of making us play to empty benches, and induced us to

remove to Colman's Theatre, on the opposite side of the Hay Market, where we finished the season with *éclat*. While we performed there, a Frenchman of the name of Allday played, for the first time in England, a concerto on the violin, in which he introduced 'God save the King,' with a great number of variations. This gentleman was a good player, though not equal to some of our first-rate performers. Mr. Allday had played seven or eight of his variations with applause; but after two or three more, the audience becoming tired, began to cough and beat the floor with their sticks. The performer however still persevering, one called out from the gallery, "What! are you going to play all night, Mr. Allday?" This produced a general laugh, which being by a sudden transition converted into disapprobation, they at length hissed him off. This gentleman's misfortune arose probably out of the idea that Englishmen, being devoted to their national anthem, could not have too much of it. It would have been well for Mr. Allday if he had taken a leaf out of the book of Mr. C—, who, being called on in a Christmas party for a song, stated, that he had but one, which consisted of forty-five verses; whereby he might have come off smoothly, or like Mr. C—, have been excused his exertion till the days became longer.

Giardini, the popular violin player of former days, who came to the Italian Opera two years before with his pupil, Signora Laurenti, took a parting benefit at Ranelagh on the 15th of May, when was performed his oratorio of 'Ruth.' The singers, who volunteered their services, were Mrs. Crouch, Miss Parke, my niece, Miss Poole, Mr. Kelly, and Mr. Bartleman. The great point of attraction was Giardini's violin concerto, which, allowing for his age, almost seventy, was in all respects worthy his high reputation. He did not aim to surprise; but he played with great expression: his tone and taste were exquisite, and the universal applause he received was truly valuable, coming from the best judges, among whom were his old patrons, the Dukes of Gloucester and Dorset, each of whom presented him with a hundred pounds for their ticket. Giardini doubtless expected, on his return to this country, to have shared the public engagements with Cramer: but in that he was disappointed, for Cramer had got firm possession of nearly the whole of them. Giardini, a little chagrined, meeting Cramer, thus sarcastically saluted him: "How do you do, Mr. Harlequin Everywhere?" To which Cramer, with a smile of triumph, replied, "Pretty well, I thank you, Mr. Harlequin Nowhere!" Giardini, when in his zenith, produced on the violin a tone

more powerful and clear than any of his contemporaries; and even on an indifferent fiddle he displayed nearly the same admirable qualities. This knack, if I may be allowed the expression, proved very profitable to Giardini, enabling him to sell his inferior instruments at a large price to gentlemen, who, in his hands, admired their powerful tone; though they found afterwards, to their great surprise, that they could draw forth very little, apparently not aware that the tone came from the skill used, not from the fiddle. This bears some analogy to the famous German trumpeter, Mr. Catzenelbogen, who had also the power of producing on his instrument a tone superior to any before heard, notwithstanding he had a considerable hole in one of his front teeth. From this dental defect, however, some of his pupils imagined his beauty of tone was derived, till having, in imitation of him, caused their own to be perforated, they discovered that they could not produce any!

Delpini, the Italian buffoon, well known to the fashionables, who had been an appendage to the Opera House, and had been engaged in the pantomimes at Covent Garden Theatre, being out of employ, attempted to repair his shattered fortune, by taking a benefit at Colman's Theatre in the Hay Market on the 18th of May; and the Prince

of Wales, with his usual condescension, having noticed him, he repaired to Carlton House to endeavour to obtain his patronage on the occasion. Delpini, having sent in his name by the page in waiting, the Prince admitted him, when, in his broken English, Delpini solicited the honour of his presence at his "benefice," as he termed it. The Prince, who was engaged on that night, telling him that he could not attend, the buffoon, with a countenance of woe, whined out, "Ah me! if your Royal Highness no go to my benefice, poor Delpini will go to your papa's Bench!" The performance given by Delpini at his benefit was repeated several times at the same Theatre, and was patronised by many of the nobility, who had laughed at his comicalities. It consisted of a burlesque, performed by himself and others, of the then popular ballet at the Opera House, called, 'The Deserter of Naples,' singing, and imitations of the actors by Mr. Kean. This man, a master tailor in St. Martin's Lane, who had lost a leg, and was therefore nicknamed Wooden-legged Kean, preferring the boards of a theatre to his own shopboard, had been a constant attendant at the play-houses, for the purpose of taking measure of the performers, in order to make his imitations of them fit; and having on several occasions exhibited his faculty in public with con-

siderable effect, had become so vain, that he boasted his superiority, even in the presence of those whom he had taken off. This occurring one night at a coffee-house in Covent Garden, the elder Bannister said to him, "Mr. Kean, I think you are going a little too far: mind what you are about, sir, or I'll lower your consequence in a minute."—"What do you mean, sir?" replied the enraged little wooden-legged tailor. "I should be glad to know, sir, how you can lower my consequence."—"Why," rejoined Bannister coolly, "I'll saw off an inch from your wooden leg."

On the 23rd of May the Drury Lane company, who played at the King's Theatre during the rebuilding of Drury Lane Theatre, performed a new serious opera, intitled, 'Dido, Queen of Carthage.' The music, chiefly by S. Storace, included selections from Salieri, Sacchini, Sarti, &c. Madame Mara, who was engaged for a limited number of nights, exerted her fine talent with extraordinary effect, and sang the airs, recitatives, &c. with the utmost taste and expression. Mrs. Crouch was very happy in the part of Eneas. The trio, sung by Mara, Mrs. Crouch, and Kelly, is a beautiful composition, and was loudly encored. The whole of the music was highly successful; but the length of the recitatives was not calculated to enrapture the mixed audience of an English theatre.

Dibdin opened his new little theatre, called 'Sans Souci,' opposite Beaufort Buildings in the Strand, on the 20th of October, with great success.

It had been confidently said that Dibdin and Lee Lewis, the popular comedian, had some time back determined to proceed together to the East Indies, for the purpose of giving their performances conjointly: but, for what reason I know not, Dibdin remained in England, while his colleague took his departure. Lee Lewis, who was a dissipated character, having got into difficulties, either to avoid, or to be enabled to liquidate them, got himself smuggled out for the purpose of giving his performance there, called 'A Lecture on Heads,' while Lord Cornwallis, a nobleman equally distinguished for his liberality and his justice, was governor-general. When Lee Lewis had arrived at the seat of government in India, it appeared that he had neglected to bring with him one trifling thing, namely, the document certifying his permission to emigrate to that country, from the Directors of the East India Company in London. Lord Cornwallis, therefore, caused it to be made known to him, that, as he was not possessed of so essential an instrument, it afforded him pain to say that he could not, consistently with his office, permit him, either to give

his performance, or to remain there. His lordship however kindly added, that as he was so peculiarly circumstanced, he would do for him all that was in his power, and suffered him to take a benefit, which being patronised by the governor-general, procured for Lee Lewis a sufficient sum of money to pay his passage home again, and to leave a handsome surplus for other occasions. Had Lee Lewis emigrated to any of the King's dominions, he might with impunity have laboured in his vocation, although the despotic rulers in Leadenhall Street, forgetting that genius should be a universal passport, would not permit him to exercise his talent in their territory!

At the King's Theatre, the Drury Lane Company presented for the first time, on the 21st of November, a new comic opera called 'The Pirates,' the music principally composed by S. Storace, with a few pieces selected from Anfossi, Bianchi, and Giuglielmi. In this piece Kelly, Bannister, junior, Mrs. Crouch, and Signora Storace, gave their songs with great spirit and effect. Storace, in the pleasing air, 'The Lullaby,' was loudly encored. The music is in many parts beautiful.

1793.

The proprietor of the King's Theatre having at length triumphed over his late opponents, opened

for the season, on the 26th of January, with Paesiello's comic opera, 'Il Barbiere di Seviglia,' in which Morelli and Storace performed with great effect. Cramer was leader, and Badina poet. And on the 5th of February a new serious opera was produced, called 'Guischi Agrigento,' for the purpose of introducing Signor Bruni, whose singing was chaste and expressive. If he did not surprise like Mara, he gratified by his plaintive melody. Paesiello added to his fame by the composition of this opera. The manager, who was by late events roused into activity, produced another new serious opera on the 19th of March, called 'Teodilinde.' The music by Andreozzi, Cimarosa, and Federici, afforded ample scope for the transcendent powers of Mara. A new comic opera of Paesiello, intitled 'Zingari in Fiera,' was also produced on the 14th of March, in which Morelli and Storace supported their parts with great animation. Storace's part was full of spirit and frolics, which she hit off admirably. The music of this opera is characterised by elegant simplicity.

That extraordinary genius and refined musician, Wolfang Amadeus Mozart, died on the 5th of December, 1792. He was the son of the chapel-master at Saltzburg, and was born in that city in 1756. When only three years of age, he was

at all times delighted to be present while his sister received her lessons on the harpsichord; and the child would sometimes, for several hours successively, amuse himself by discovering and playing thirds on that instrument. From this early indication of genius, his father was induced to teach him short airs, and the scholar soon outstripped his hopes. Such indeed was his progress, that at the age of six years he could compose little airs while he was playing, and which his father was always obliged to write down for him upon paper. From that time his whole delight was in harmony, and none of his infant sports gave him any pleasure unless it was contrived that music should make part of them.

His progress was unremitting, and not in that usual degree which escapes notice, but so as daily to excite new surprise. The following remarkable incident, taken from Schlichtegroll's Necrology, is sufficient proof of this: His father one day entering the music-room in company with a friend, found the boy, with a pen in his hand, busily employed. "What are you about there?" said the father. "I am writing a concerto for the harpsichord," was the reply. "Indeed! it must doubtless be something very fine; let me see it." —"But, sir, it is not yet finished." The father took up the paper, and at first could discover no-

thing but a confusion of notes and spots of ink. The boy not knowing how to handle a pen, had continually filled it too full, and dropped it on the paper, which he had wiped with his hand, and then written upon the blots. Old Mozart, on examining the work more closely, was enraptured with it. "See," said he to his friend, "how regular and accurate this is! but it is too difficult to be played."—"It is a concerto!" exclaimed the boy, "and must be practised till it can be executed:—you shall hear." He then began to play; but it was beyond his powers, and he could not make them understand his meaning.

In the year 1762 his father took him and his sister to Munich, where he played a concerto before the Elector, to the astonishment and admiration of the whole court. He gave no less pleasure at Vienna, and the Emperor used frequently to call him "the little sorcerer." It was here that he first began to exhibit that pride of the artist which is indifferent to the praises of the great when they are known to be ignorant of what they admire; and this character he retained till the day of his death. On one occasion, when the Emperor was at his side, Mozart asked if Mr. Wagenseil was in the room. "He," said he, "will understand me." Wagenseil coming up to him, Mozart said, "I am going to play one of your

concertos; you must turn over the leaves for me." His father had only taught him the harpsichord: he taught himself to play on the violin. It one day afforded his father an agreeable surprise to hear the boy play the second violin in concert, and acquit himself to perfection. Genius can see no impediments: proud of his success, he soon afterwards undertook to play the principal part, and he executed it with great correctness.

Mozart's first great musical journey was made in the year 1763, accompanied by his father and sister. Although at this time he was only seven years of age, he had become so celebrated, that his character spread through almost every part of Europe. He was heard in the chapel of the King of France at Versailles, the court being present; and here his performance on the organ was, if possible, more admired than that on the harpsichord. It was in Paris that the first compositions of this infant Orpheus were engraved and published. These were two sets of sonatas, one of which he dedicated to Madame Victoire, and the other to the Comtesse de Tesse.

From Paris they travelled to London, where they gave two concerts, consisting of symphonies and other compositions of young Mozart. In one of these concerts, the King being present, a ground bass was put before him, and he imme-

diately accompanied it with a beautiful melody. Six sonatas for the harpsichord were composed by him, and printed in London. These sonatas, when a boy, I studied with great attention and pleasure. They were intitled, ' A Set of Six Sonatas for the Harpsichord, composed by Wolfang Mozart when seven years old.' The musical trio then passed over to Holland, again travelled through France, and in 1766, after an absence of three years, they returned home. Here the youthful artist continued twelve months in retirement, and dedicated all his leisure to the study of composition, with the most intricate parts of which he soon became familiar. His chief models were Emanuel Bach, Hasse, and Handel.

In 1768 he returned to Vienna, and at the request of Joseph II. composed ' La Finta Semplice,' a comic opera, which was approved of by Metestasio, but not performed. He went back to Saltzburg in the following year, and was appointed master of the concert in that city; but as he had not yet been in Italy, he commenced his journey for that country in the month of December.

Admired as his talents had been in other countries, they produced absolute enthusiasm among the Italians. Scarcely had he given proof of his genius at Milan before *la scrittura*, for the follow-

ing carnival of 1771, was conferred upon him. In the mean time he went to Bologna; and Martini was beyond measure astonished while he listened to the young German, who played without the least hesitation an extempore fugue to any given theme. Florence next resounded his praise. He arrived at Rome in Passion-week, and was present in the Papal chapel at the performance of the 'Miserere.' This is known to be the *ne plus ultra* of vocal music, and it is strictly forbidden to give any one a copy of it. Mozart's ambition was powerfully excited, and having listened with the greatest attention to the performance, he went home, wrote the music from memory, returned on the morrow to the chapel, then corrected his rough draft, and produced a copy which surprised all Rome. The 'Miserere' is always composed for a full band of many parts, and is extremely difficult of execution. Mozart heard, remembered, and correctly wrote down the whole. He next went to Naples; but soon afterwards returned to Rome, where he received the Order of the Golden Spur from the Pope. At Bologna he was unanimously elected a member and master of the Philharmonic Academy. As an admission-piece, in proof of his qualification, a fugue was required of him for four voices in the church style; and being shut up in a chamber, he wrote it in an

hour, and then received his diploma. He composed the opera of ' Mithridates' for Milan, which procured him *la scrittura* for the grand opera of the carnival of 1773, which was ' Lucio Sulla.' At length, after an absence of fifteen months, he returned once more to Saltzburg.

At the request of the Elector of Bavaria, he composed the opera of ' Idumenes' for the carnival of 1781. He soon afterwards went again to Vienna, and from his twenty-fifth year continued to reside in that capital. His compositions were spread through all Germany, and his fame through the whole civilised world. The Emperor Joseph, who was desirous of improving the German opera, engaged Mozart to compose ' Dia Ent. fah rung aus die Serail,' which was first performed in the year 1782. This excited the jealousy of the Italian company at Vienna, who caballed against his fame in every possible manner. Through some interest or other they had half persuaded the Emperor that Mozart's music was not without its defects. " This piece," said he one day to the author, " is much too fine for our ears, my dear Mozart, and it is prodigiously full of notes."— " It is, sire," he immediately answered, " just as it ought to be."

While Mozart was engaged in the composition of this opera he married Miss Weber, a performer

of distinguished merit; and to this incident the work was indebted for the character of tenderness, and the expression of passionate softness, in which its chief beauties consist. It was received both at Vienna and Prague with the most rapturous applause: every ear was struck with astonishment at the new traits of harmony, the originality of the airs, and the till then unheard-of effect of the wind instruments.

All his celebrity had hitherto produced to Mozart no solid advantages. He enjoyed no place, and had no fixed income, but subsisted on the profits arising from his lessons and from subscription concerts. 'The Marriage of Figaro' was then famous: it was transformed into an Italian opera, and the Emperor requested that Mozart would set it to music. He did so, and it was every where received with unbounded applause. Its airs, dances, and songs, enlivened every place for a whole winter. He was next engaged, by the manager of the opera at Prague, to compose the music to 'Don Giovanni.' About this time, which was the commencement of the year 1788, the finances of Mozart, from the extreme uncertainty of his profits, became greatly deranged. In order to retrieve them, he determined to come over to England and reside in London, to which place he had received frequent invitations; but

the Emperor being informed of the intention, appointed him composer of the chamber; and Mozart accepted the appointment. This highly gifted and interesting musician died, just after he had received the brevet of chapel-master of the church of St. Stephen, at the early age of thirty-five years. Indefatigable to his latest moments, he composed his three finest works only a very short time before his death. These were the 'Zauber Flöte,' or, 'Enchanted Flute,' 'La Clemenza di Tito,' and a Requiem, the latter of which he just lived to finish. The Zauber Flöte was composed for one of the theatres of the fauxbourg of Vienna; and never had any dramatic piece such an astonishing continuance of success. Its uninterrupted representations were beyond all example, and its airs and songs were repeated through the whole empire, from the cottage to the palace. 'La Clemenza di Tito' was demanded by the states of Bohemia for the coronation of Leopold. Mozart began it in his carriage on his journey to Prague, and it was finished in eighteen days.

The circumstances attending the composition of the Requiem are extremely interesting. A short time before Mozart's death a stranger came to him and requested that he would compose, as speedily as possible, a Requiem for a Catholic

prince, who perceiving himself on the verge of the grave, wished for such a piece to be performed before him, in order to soothe his mind and familiarise it to the idea of its approaching dissolution. Mozart undertook the work, and the stranger deposited with him four hundred ducats, though only two hundred were demanded. During the progress of this composition, Mozart felt an unusual agitation of mind, which at length rose to such a height, that he one day declared to his wife, that he could not possibly persuade himself but that the Requiem upon which he was employed was for his own death. His wife, unable by any persuasion to efface the impression, earnestly requested him to give her the score. This he did, and when he appeared somewhat more tranquillised, and master of himself, she returned it to him to finish; but he soon relapsed into his former despondency. On the day of his death he asked for the Requiem, which was brought to his bed. "Was I not right," said he, "when I declared that it was for myself I was composing this funeral piece?" and the tears bedewed his cheeks: it was his farewell to music. After his death we are informed that the stranger came for and received the Requiem, and has not been heard of since. The widow, however, preserved the score.

Mozart died loaded with debts; but his wife and children met with ample and honourable protection and support. The debts of Mozart had perhaps not been necessary; but he had too generous a disposition to be an economist.

The genius and talents of Mozart were chiefly displayed by the employment of wind instruments, and in this it was that he showed his greatest powers. His melody is always simple, natural, and energetic, accurately expressing the sentiments and individual situations of his personages. His choruses and all his finales are truly excellent.

The disposition of Mozart was naturally kind, gentle, and frank. In a private society a new piece of Haydn's was performed; and a certain musician, who was never heard to praise any composition but his own, did not fail to criticise the music. "There, now," he exclaimed to Mozart, "there is a passage that I should not have written."—"Nor I neither," was the answer; "and I will tell you why: we should neither of us have been able to conceive it." As a proof how laborious Mozart was in his profession, it is well known that he composed six different pieces during the last four months of his life; although he was continually ill, and obliged to undertake two journeys during the time. I have heard Haydn,

while he was in England, declare that Mozart was the most extraordinary, original, and comprehensive musical genius that was ever known in this or any age.

A few hours before his death, Mozart said, "I begin to see what might be done with music." This observation confirms me in the opinion I have long entertained, that the more the field of science is explored, the more extended is the prospect, and that the man who thinks he has done enough, has done nothing.

The professional concert commenced on the 1st of February at the Hanover Square Rooms. In order to satisfy the thirst of the public for novelty, some fine glees were introduced this season, composed expressly for the undertaking by Mr. Webbe, Dr. Calcot, Messrs. Danby, and R. T. Stevens. They were admirably sung, and were greatly applauded. The concertos of the season were performed by Cramer, the elder Parke, Cervetto, myself, Parkinson, and Clementi. Cramer, seeing amongst the company at the first concert Mr. B—l, a leading resident professor of music at Manchester, related the following curious piece of civility which he had received from that gentleman: Cramer being engaged to lead the band at a late music meeting at Manchester, was invited by Mr. B—l to dine with him, when,

amongst other vegetables on the table, were some turnips (a root Lancashire is famous for), which he praised very much. In the early part of the following year Cramer received a letter from Mr. B—l, informing him, that he had by the waggon sent him a present of a few turnips, which would be forwarded to his house. A few days afterwards the present, a whole hogshead of turnips, was brought in a cart to Newman Street, for the carriage of which Cramer had to pay—two guineas!

The nobility's Sunday concerts began for the season, at the Duke of Queensberry's, where the faro table proved a powerful rival to the music, and perhaps formed the great point of attraction. The music, however, was highly advantageous to the numerous and elegant assemblage; for when the beautiful countenances of the ladies were ruffled, and even distorted by their losses at the former, by listening a short time to the latter, they became tranquillised, and recovered their wonted fascinations. Cramer led the fine band of the professional concert. The Prince of Wales and the Dukes of York and Clarence were present. Salomon's concert commenced in Hanover Square, the 7th of February. Signor Bruni and Signora Storace were the singers. Viotti played a violin concerto in a style of great perfection, and Dussek

played one on the piano-forte, in which he displayed every elegance and expression of which that instrument is susceptible. The concert of ancient music commenced in Tottenham Street, the 7th of February, in the presence of their Majesties, and the vocal concert (its second season) at Willis's rooms, the 9th of February, of which Mr. Weichsell was leader.

This season I went, in company with Messrs. Bowden and Incledon, and Mrs. Martyr, (all of Covent Garden Theatre,) to Portsmouth, where we gave some concerts during Passion-week at the Assembly Rooms. This musical undertaking was patronised by Lord Boyle, the present Earl of Cork, the Honourable Captain (afterwards Admiral) Nugent, and Mrs. Nugent, Sir Roger Curtis, &c. &c. The company, who were numerous and elegant, were much gratified with the songs, &c., particularly with Incledon's 'Black eyed Susan,' 'The storm,' and 'Sweet echo,' finely sung by Mrs. Martyr, and accompanied in an adjoining room by me on the oboe. I also played a concerto on that instrument, in which I introduced, as the subject of my rondo Dibdin's popular air, 'Poor Jack,' which received enthusiastic applause. We had intended to give two concerts only; but at the request of several of the leading personages in Portsmouth, we were induced to give two ad-

ditional ones. Through the kindness of the late Mr. Motley, the proprietor of the library, to whom I was recommended by my friend Captain Barlow, I had lodgings prepared for me at the house of one of the pursers serving in the fleet which then lay there. Being up rather late at a party after the first concert, when I went home I requested the old lady (the purser's wife), who opened the door for me, not to let the servant knock at my bed-room door till nine o'clock in the morning. I was, notwithstanding, very unceremoniously roused at five, by a bang from a forty-eight pounder of the admiral's ship, which, being quite unexpected on my part, had that effect on me, that when I had recovered from the surprise it had occasioned, I found myself out of bed, and standing on the carpet, whilst the good people of Portsmouth no doubt were, from habit, enjoying their slumbers undisturbed. During the time I remained at Portsmouth I had the pleasure of being introduced to the gallant Sir Roger Curtis, whose superior skill and courage were so gloriously blended with humanity, in the destruction of the French and Spanish gun-boats, in their attack on Gibraltar in the year 1782. Walking one morning up the High Street, I received a sailor's compliment from that distinguished commander, Sir A. S. Hammond, who, while I was

passing the door of the hotel, said to a friend with him, in the true nautical style,—" That's a damn'd fine oboe player sailing by." At our last concert the room was crowded to excess; and the whole of it went off with such *éclat*, that our departure for London the following morning was perhaps honoured by the regrets of all the fashionable and respectable persons in Portsmouth and its vicinity.

Dibdin opened his theatre, ' Sans Souci,' in the Strand, the 16th of February. As a proof of the versatility of Dibdin's genius, it need only be stated that this pretty little theatre was planned, painted, and decorated by himself, and that he wrote the recitations, and songs, composed the music to them, and sang, and accompanied them on an organised piano-forte of his own invention. It was here he produced several of his admirable sea songs, ' Poor Jack,' ' Lovely Nan,' ' Tom Tough,' and that which every British sailor delights in—' There's nothing like grog !'

This year a new and select society, styled ' The Glee Club,' was formed, the members of which consisted of Messrs. Shield, Johnstone, Bannister the elder, Incledon, Dignum, C. Ashley, and myself. It was held on Sunday evenings at the Garrick's Head Coffee-house, in Bow Street, Covent Garden, once a fortnight, when we amused

ourselves by singing the works of the old and modern masters, after which we sat down to supper, and passed an agreeable hour or two. At one of our meetings an entertaining hoax was played on Incledon, who, though a popular singer, was a very bad actor. Incledon had for some reason or other taken an unbounded dislike to the clergy, which was highly excited by the following artifice: One of the party stated that an intended performance for a charitable purpose, in which Incledon was to sing, had been abandoned in consequence of the bishop having declared that he would not permit an actor to sing in the church. Incledon, (who was very irritable,) as was anticipated, broke out in a violent strain, (not of panegyric,) conceiving the word *actor* to have been used as a term of reproach, and addressing himself to Bannister, said with great vehemence, "There, Charles, do you hear that? he calls me an actor. What do you think of that?"—"Why," said Bannister, if I was you, I'd make him prove his words." On another occasion, Dignum, the well-known singer, who had been unwell, and whose peculiar attachment to his brother was such that he scarcely ever spoke of matters relating to himself without including him, being asked by Charles Bannister how he was, replied, in his silly manner, "I am not much better, no

more is my brother."—"What is the matter with you?" said Bannister.—"Oh!" said Dignum, "the doctor thinks I am consumptive, and so is my brother."—"Well," said Bannister, "but what does he advise you to take?"—"He says I must take asses' milk, and so must my brother." —"Oh!" said Bannister, "if you are to take asses' milk, I'd advise you to suck one another." Several glees were composed for this club, which were afterwards given to the public, and experienced a flattering reception. At a subsequent meeting, the conversation turning on Dr. Arne and his works, it was lamented that there was not any public memorial of that great musician; and it being suggested that such an object might be accomplished by a subscription, we laid the foundation of one, by depositing two guineas each, with a determination to aid it by endeavouring to influence the professors at large, and the admirers of his charming music, to follow our example, for the purpose of placing a marble bust of Arne in Westminster Abbey. At the following meeting we received a letter from Dr. Arnold, stating that the musical graduates would be happy to join us in our laudable undertaking. This being agreed to, a meeting was called at Dr. Arnold's house in Duke Street, Westminster, and it being determined to give a public performance,

consisting of a selection from the works of that great master, Arne, a committee was formed (of which I was one) to carry it into execution. In obtaining singers of eminence we experienced no difficulty, and of instrumental performers we had an abundance of offers. The night was fixed, the Theatre Royal in the Hay Market was engaged, and the advertisements were published; when lo! a letter arrived from the proprietor of Covent Garden Theatre, announcing that he could not on any account suffer his performers to assist in the undertaking. By this interdiction from a quarter where it was least expected, Dr. Arne's productions having frequently filled the treasury of that theatre, we were, "by one fell swoop," deprived of the powerful aid of Mr. Incledon, Mr. Bannister, Mr. Johstone, and Mrs. Billington, and in consequence compelled to abandon an undertaking the object of which was to pay a tribute of respect to the memory of one of the greatest composers this country had produced, and whose productions had for many years delighted the public. The public would, doubtless, by their presence on the occasion, have enabled us to have carried into effect the object in which we felt a lively interest. It is, however, consolotary to reflect, that amongst the multifarious works of Dr. Arne there is one, 'Rule Britannia,' which will be hailed by Britons

with enthusiasm whilst freedom and patriotism exist.

In the early part of September, being engaged for the grand music meeting at Canterbury, I set out in a post-chaise with Mr. Cramer, and his son Mr. F. Cramer, for that city, where we arrived in the evening. The next morning we received an invitation from Colonel Egerton, (afterwards Earl of Bridgewater,) who was stationed there with his regiment, to pass the week with him and his accomplished lady. This invitation we accepted, and were highly gratified with their unaffected hospitality and refined manners. At this meeting Signora Storace and Miss Poole were at the head of the vocalists. Cramer led the band, Mr. F. Cramer the second violins, I played the principal oboe and concertos, and Dr. Arnold presided at the organ. At the rehearsal of the first performance Mr. Hyde, the trumpet-player, not having arrived, recourse was had to one belonging to a regiment quartered there. Cramer, who was always careful that the wind instruments should be well in tune, mildly said to that person, "Your trumpet is too sharp."—"Is it?" said he, "then I'll soon make it flat enough." He then put in too long a crook, which making it much too flat, and Cramer pointing it out to him, the trumpeter impatiently replied, "Oh, never mind, I

shall be in tune with some of them." The performances went off with the greatest *éclat*, and were attended by all the leading persons of that and the adjoining counties.

When the music meeting at Canterbury was ended, I proceeded from that city to pass a fortnight at Ramsgate, about seventeen miles distant, where I met my friend Major Waller, author of a successful poem, intitled "Sketches of eminent musicians." On leaving that fashionable watering-place in the diligence, (a carriage then in general use for travelling,) in company with a a lady, we stopped at a house in the suburbs of the town, near Pegwell Bay, to take up the third passenger. It not being quite daylight, when we arrived there, I was ignorant of the name and rank of our new associate; but I shortly afterwards ascertained that he was the distinguished barrister, Mr. G——. That gentleman's conversation was animated and polite; but I thought that in one instance he went a little too far, by subsequently saying to a strange lady, who, as well as himself had for a few minutes slumbered, "Now, madam, I can say that I have had the pleasure of sleeping with you." It ought however to be observed, that Mr. G—— was at that time a young man, and consequently not a judge. That gentleman's practice was chiefly at

the Old Bailey, whither he was proceeding to attend the September sessions. Amongst other topics during our day's journey, he alluded to an approaching trial for the supposed murder of a German musician, who had played the double bass at the King's Theatre in the Hay Market, named Kotzwara, who being in the habit of gratifying his sensual appetites to excess, was poor, although his talents were such that he might otherwise have acquired a respectable competency. In fact he was a genius, and like many of that class, as uncertain as the climate or the stock exchange. Whether Kotzwara was a good original composer I know not, though his sonata, 'The Battle of Prague,' (well known to most of the ladies who cultivate that favourite instrument the piano-forte,) speaks in his favour; but as an imitative one, he perhaps had no equal. Kotzwara was employed by certain music-sellers to compose trios, quartets, &c., in the style of the popular writers on the continent, Haydn, Pleyel, and others; and his productions displayed so accurately the taste and science of his prototypes, that, like the admirable copies of the pictures of the old masters by Renigale, the best judges considered them to be originals. He had been found hanging in a house of ill-fame, in a low court leading into Chandos Street, Covent Garden. The case, as it

afterwards appeared on the trial, was a very singular one; but, as it was proved that he was suspended by his own desire, and that neither he nor the parties implicated in the transaction ever contemplated death, they were acquitted.

At the Theatre Royal Haymarket a new musical piece in two acts, called 'The Children in the Wood,' written by Mr. Morton, was produced by the Drury Lane company on the 1st of October. The overture and the airs, which were composed by Dr. Arnold, are pleasing and characteristic. This piece met with a distinguished success, towards which the admirable performance of Mr. Bannister, jun., in the part of Walter, mainly contributed.

1794.

The King's Theatre opened for the season on the 11th of January, with a comic opera by Cimarosa, called 'Il Matrimonio Segreto,' under the direction of Federici; Cramer was leader, and Badini poet. The popular singer of the continent, Madame Banti, not being expected to arrive in England till April, comic operas were the order of the day; one of which, 'Gli contadini buzzari,' was performed with great applause, February 18th. Signora Casentini, by her tasteful style of singing, and her unaffected gentleness and ease, was ex-

tremely interesting. Morelli, in the air, ' Donne, donne,' displayed his clear deep voice with such effect, as produced a general encore. The curiosity of the musical world, which had been greatly excited by the fame of Madame Banti, was, on the 26th of April, gratified by her making her first appearance in England in the new serious opera of ' Semiramide, o la vendetta di Nino ;' the music by Bianchi. The voice of Banti evinced sweetness, power, and flexibility. Her execution was rapid and neat, and she was equally excellent in the bravura and cantabile styles of singing ; she was besides a graceful actress. Her performanc throughout the opera enraptured the audience, and she was vehemently applauded. Giardini being asked his opinion of Banti, previous to her arrival in England, said, " She is the first singer in Italy, and drinks a bottle of wine every day." Signor Roselli also made his first appearance on the same evening : his voice was of a very superior quality, and his style was graceful and expressive : he was well received. Another first appearance took place on Saturday, May 17th, in Madame Morichelli, who performed in a new comic opera, intitled ' Il burbero di buone cose.' Morichelli, both in singing and acting was admirable, and was greatly applauded. The music of this opera is among the best productions of Martini.

Madame Banti drinking a bottle of wine *per diem*, no doubt excited great surprise in Italy, while in our sister kingdom it would have been observed with indifference. Had Banti adopted the following plan, admiration would cease, and sarcasm be dumb. While I was in Ireland I occasionally visited a very good sort of lady, who was considered amongst her Irish friends to be a very sober personage, because she never drank more than one tumbler of brandy and water after supper, (which was the fact,) and, therefore, if any unseemly appearances occurred, they were liberally imputed, not to the strength of the liquor, but to the weakness of her head. The plan discovered by this lady was ingenious and novel, although the English ladies might not think it exactly calculated for imitation. As soon as the tablecloth was withdrawn this model of sobriety would, from a decanter placed near her, mix what others would call a jolly good glass, which, after having drank half off, she would pronounce too weak. This defect she remedied of course by pouring in more brandy; and having drank a similar quantity of that also, she would at length exclaim, "Bless me! I have now made it too strong!" when a small portion of water being added, diluted it so much, that recourse was again had to the brandy-bottle; thus alternately

strengthening and weakening till she became incapable of mixing any longer, even with her company.

The professional concert terminated at the end of the last season, the art of music having been superseded by the art of war. Salomon's concert, which again had the powerful assistance of Haydn, began at the Hanover Square Rooms on Monday, February 3d. The singers were, Madame Mara, and Mr. Fischer, one of the principal opera singers to the King of Prussia. The concerto players were Viotti, Ashe, and Madame Krumpholtz, on the violin, flute, and harp.

The oratorios at Covent Garden Theatre commenced on Friday March 7, with a grand selection; and the new Theatre Royal Drury Lane opened for the first time since it had been rebuilt, with oratorios, on Wednesday March 12, under the direction of Mr. Linley and Signor Storace. The performance was a selection. the singers were Messrs. Harrison, Kelly, and Dignum, Mrs. Crouch, Mrs. Bland, and Signora Storace. At the end of the first act I played a concerto on the oboe, and at the end of the second, another was performed on the violin by Mr. Jarnovicki. The leader was Mr. Shaw. Jarnovicki displayed a fine round and sweet tone; his execution was brilliant, and his style natural and pleasing. His concerto,

though difficult, was full of melody, and he played it with great ease. He was generally and vehemently applauded. This new theatre was one of the most beautiful fabrics ever dedicated to the entertainment of a great people, and was crowded to excess. The success of these performances was so great, that they were resumed for several nights after Easter, whereby I was compelled occasionally to leave the theatrical performances at Covent Garden Theatre to play my oboe concertos at the oratorios of Drury Lane.

The sudden and awful death of John Palmer, the celebrated actor, excited at this time great surprise and sympathy. Palmer, the original Joseph Surface, in the admirable comedy of ' The School for Scandal, was, in the early part of life, together with his father, a bill-sticker to Drury Lane Theatre, in Garrick's time. Soon after he had got on the stage as an actor he evinced great ability, and entered into a good line of parts. He was a favourite with the public, and on account of his fine face and person, was much admired by ladies, one of whom made him a present of a valuable pair of diamond knee-buckles. Palmer wearing one evening these elegant appendages of dress, while acting one of his favourite characters, Parsons, the inimitable comedian of the day, said

to Charles Bannister, " Palmer, I perceive, deals in diamonds."—" Yes," replied Bannister, " but I recollect the time when he dealt in paste." When Mrs. Siddons first appeared at Drury Lane Theatre in the year 1782, in the tragedy of 'The Gamester,' Palmer performed the character of Stukely, in which he experienced a novel reception. His personation of the hypocrite was so perfect, and at the same time so revolting, that the audience, from the force of the illusion, at his exits hissed him off. But when he re-appeared in a subsequent scene ample testimony was borne to his talent, by his being honoured with unbounded applause; and at the end of the scene he was again involuntarily hissed off. Palmer, notwithstanding his striking histrionic ability, experienced great vicissitudes through life, and at length met a very extraordinary death. He was acting in the character of the Stranger, in the popular play of that name, at the Liverpool Theatre, and when he had arrived at that part of it where he had to say, " There is another and a better world," he had scarcely uttered those words, than he, without any apparent previous indisposition, fell lifeless on the stage, in the presence of an astonished and numerous audience.

At Covent Garden Theatre a new opera, in

three acts was produced, on February 22d, called 'The Travellers in Switzerland,' written by the Rev. H. Bate Dudley. The music was composed and compiled by Mr. Shield. The singers in it were Miss Poole, Mrs. Martyr, Mr. Incledon, and Mr. Fawcet. The latter had a song in it new to the English stage. It consisted of a multiplicity of words in rapid succession, enumerating the names of most of the modern artists in Europe. In this song Mr. Fawcet displayed such surprising volubility and articulation, as to elicit abundant applause and a general encore. This opera was much indebted for its success to the composer Mr. Shield. At the same theatre was produced, on the 22d of April, a new comic opera, in two acts, intitled 'Netly Abbey,' written by Mr. Pearce. In this piece Fawcet had a sea song, 'Blue Peter,' in which was introduced 'The boxing of the compass,' which, from the merit of the music (by Shield) and the effective manner in which it was sung, was loudly encored. Mrs. Martyr, as a sailor boy, in the song 'Yo! heave ho!' composed by me, was greatly applauded; and Incledon sang the old song, 'On board the Arethusa,' admirably. The music of this piece, composed by Paesiello, Baumgarten, Dr. Arne, myself, and Shield, was very effective, and had a long run.

The overture was composed by me. Speaking of composers reminds me of the following whimsical circumstance.

A former leader of the band at one of the national theatres, who had never been suspected of possessing any knowledge of the science of music, had nevertheless sufficient ingenuity to get himself appointed by the manager to compose a moiety of the music of a new ballet of action for the theatre to which he was attached. When the new music of the leader came to be rehearsed, very much to the surprise of the band, it displayed such superior taste and science as to induce them to think they had not justly appreciated, till then, his talents as a composer. A few months afterwards, however, Mr. T——, the admired German pianist, who had actually composed it for the leader, not being able to obtain from him the stipulated sum, as the reward for his secrecy and labour, to use a vulgar phrase, 'Let the cat out of the bag,' by proclaiming the bad faith of the leader, and his own disappointment. This was afterwards termed "composing by deputy!" A discovery like this would in most men have called forth a blush; but the "composer by deputy" being, as Teague says, "not aisily put out of countenance," bore it with true Christian fortitude!

At the new Theatre Royal Drury Lane was

produced, on the 25th of April, a new musical romance, in three acts, called 'Lodoiska,' composed and selected from Cherubini, Kreutzer, and Andreozzi, by S. Storace. The music of this piece is beautiful, and the overture, by Kreutzer, is one of the most fascinating compositions ever listened to. It was loudly encored. This overture became so popular, that several of our minor composers published most barefaced copies of it; while others, more wary in making it their model, disguised their plagiarisms, "as gipsies do stolen children, to make them pass for their own!"

At the King's Theatre a grand performance was given on the 2d of July, in celebration of the glorious victory obtained by Earl Howe over the fleet of the French republic. The performance consisted of the comic opera 'Le Serva padrona,' with appropriate ballets; after which Madame Banti, who had become extremely popular, sang our national song 'Rule Britannia,' in which she was vociferously encored, although her bad English amounted almost to burlesque! This clearly shows that fashion, like love, is blind.

Having resigned my situation in the orchestra of Vauxhall Gardens, in the middle of June I went to Birmingham, being engaged for six weeks to play concertos, &c. at the Vauxhall Gardens there. These gardens were about half a

mile from the town: they were extensive and beautiful; and the proprietor of them keeping a large tavern, the company were supplied with cold provisions, pastry, &c. for supper, in as good a style as the Londoners. At Birmingham there was no transparent ham, sliced so thin, as to enable one to almost read through it; nor any quarts of wine ingeniously squeezed into pint decanters! No; the viands were of the most substantial and excellent qualities; and though last, not least, were procured at half the price. To convey some idea of the expense of living at Birmingham, at the period alluded to, it will be sufficient to state, that during my stay there, I resided in the before-mentioned tavern, where I was elegantly lodged and boarded (wine excepted) for fourteen shillings a week! The gardens were opened for the reception of the public one night in the week, with a concert of vocal and instrumental music; in which I played concertos on the oboe with universal approbation. I also accompanied Mrs. Martyr, of Covent Garden Theatre, in the song of 'Sweet echo;' and the situation of the gardens being such as permitted me to be concealed from view whilst making the responses to the voice on the oboe, the effect it produced called forth a tumultuous encore. Indeed this song was so great a favourite, that on one occasion, rain

coming on just before the concert commenced, it was proposed by the audience to the proprietor, that if he would let them have that song only they would not require to have their money to be returned, which was the custom when the weather proved unfavourable at that part of the evening. Their request being complied with, after listening to ‘ Sweet echo’ twice, they departed highly gratified. In accordance with the terms of my engagement, I had a benefit clear of all expenses, and being favoured by my Vauxhall friends near London with a loan of decorations, which had been used in their gardens for that occasion, I was thereby enabled to make a pretty display in compliment to Lord Howe’s late glorious victory, and had an attendance of fifteen hundred persons, amongst whom were most of the principal residents in Birmingham and its vicinity. The opulent inhabitants of that city are great admirers and promoters of music, whose tones were first regulated by Pythagoras from the vibrations of a blacksmith’s anvil. In the winter they have subscription concerts. Their spacious and elegant theatre, in which a London company of singers and actors perform, is open in the summer; and in the autumn they have occasionally grand musical festivals for the benefit of their hospitals and public charities. Whilst re-

maining at Birmingham I received polite attentions from several leading persons, particularly Mr. H—n, an old gentleman, who had been a manufacturer, but had retired many years since with a large fortune. He was a plain good sort of man, but had a peculiar mode of expressing himself, generally ending his speech with the words "such as it is." The first time I visited him, on entering the dining parlour to partake of an excellent dinner, he desired I would sit next to him, adding, "Mr. Parke, you see your dinner—such as it is." When the meal was finished, and the dessert and wine were placed on the table, he recommended to me some port wine which he had in bottle fifteen years, saying, "Pray don't spare it, for you are heartily welcome to it—such as it is." Having a concerto to play at Vauxhall that evening, I was compelled to depart rather early, and on rising to take my leave, the old gentleman said, with great kindness, "Mr. Parke, I am sorry you are going so soon, for I should like to have more of your company—such as it is."

The King's Theatre opened for the season, on December the 6th, with the new comic opera of 'L' Amore Contrastato.' In this opera Signor Bonfanta made his first appearance in England, as primo buffo, in the place of

Morelli, who held out for an increase of salary. The performance of Bonfanta was a failure, which afforded pleasure to no one except Morelli, who was watching the progress of the attempt in a corner of the pit.

1795.

The failure of Signor Bonfanta compelled the manager of the King's Theatre to re-engage Morelli, who, on Saturday, January the 10th, appeared in the comic opera of 'I Zingeri in Fiera.' He performed the character with great spirit and effect, and the audience testified their satisfaction by frequent plaudits. The performance of Madame Morichelli was admirable. On Saturday, February the 7th, was repeated Bianchi's serious opera of 'Semiramide,' in which Madame Banti and Mr. Kelly performed; the latter by permission of the proprietors of Drury Lane Theatre. The song, with an obligato accompaniment for the violin, was exquisitely sung by Banti, and finely played by Cramer. From parsimony or obstinacy, the serious opera suffered much this season, from the want of a first-rate male singer, which occasioned great dissatisfaction among the subscribers.

Performances of sacred music were given at the King's Theatre, on the six Fridays in Lent, by

the proprietor. The first took place on February the 20th, with the oratorio of 'Debora and Sisare,' the music of which was composed by Guiglielmi. The principal part was sustained by Banti, who executed it in a very finished style. The music of this oratorio was excellent, but it wanted that simplicity, clearness, and pathos, which characterises the divine productions of the immortal Handel. The opera band attended, led by Cramer. It may be observed, that the proprietor of the King's Theatre gives his performances at a very small expense, because he inserts a clause in the contracts of the singers he engages that they are to perform at his concerts gratis. Therefore, when he cannot let them out to any of the public concerts, he can employ them in his own without risk. The practice with the band also has been to engage them for sixty nights (the term of the subscription), compelling them at the same time to give him ten nights gratuitously, making together seventy.

On the same evening the oratorios commenced at Covent Garden Theatre, with Handel's sacred oratorio, 'The Messiah,' under the direction of Mr. Ashley. Madame Mara and Mr. Bartleman sang with the best possible effect, and the choruses (particularly 'All we like sheep,' and

the hallelujah,) were finely performed. The preference shown by the public to the performances at this house occasioned those at the King's Theatre to be thinly attended.

Their Majesties honoured the concert of ancient music with their presence in Tottenham Street, February 24th. The vocal concert commenced at Willis's Rooms, February 12th; and Salomon's concert (aided by Haydn) in Hanover Square, February 27th. His Royal Highness the Duke of York gave a grand concert of instrumental music, March 2nd, at York House, Piccadilly, (where the Albany Chambers now stand,) at which their Majesties and the Princesses were present. Salomon led the band, amongst whom were Cervetto, the elder Parke, Shield, myself, Dance, Blake, and Haydn, who presided at the piano-forte. Jarnovicki was to have played a concerto on the violin, by desire of Her Majesty, who had never heard him perform; but on coming into the room just before the music commenced, and perceiving Salomon there, (to whom he bore a violent hatred,) Jarnovicki vented his spleen by leaving the house immediately. This insolent foreigner, who suffered professional jealousy to supersede the respect due to the queen of a great nation, deserved punishment for his presumption. When we had tuned our instruments, and were

waiting for the signal to begin, His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester (brother to the King) entered the room, and fixing his eye on a respectable double-bass player, belonging to the Italian Opera, named *Jouve*, who had been several years in England, suddenly exclaimed, "There's a Frenchman!" and hurried out of the room. It ought not to appear extraordinary that persons of such exalted rank should have been mistrustful in times when the blind fury of the French Revolution had been so cruelly levelled at royalty, and when several instances had occurred of the British government finding it necessary to send Frenchmen out of the kingdom, one of whom, on taking leave of his friend, (an Italian musician,) said, "Fare ye well; I shall be back again in a fortnight with my friend *Buonaparte*." Their Majesties, however, and the Princesses, sat in the room during the whole of the concert.

At the end of the first part of the concert Haydn had the distinguished honour of being formally introduced to His Majesty George III., by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. My station at the time was so near to the King, that I could not avoid hearing the whole of their conversation. Amongst other observations, His Majesty said (in English) "Doctor Haydn, you have written a great deal." To which Haydn modestly

replied, "Yes, Sire, a great deal more than is good." To which the King neatly rejoined, "Oh no, the world contradicts that."

After his introduction, Haydn, by desire of the Queen, sat down to the piano-forte, and, surrounded by Her Majesty and her royal and accomplished daughters, sung, and accompanied himself admirably in several of his *canzonets*. The gracious reception Haydn experienced from the King was not only gratifying to *his* feelings, but flattering to the science he professed; and while it displayed the condescension and liberality of a great and good monarch, it could not fail proving a powerful stimulus to rising *genius*.

The following week I attended a grand instrumental concert given by the Prince of Wales at Carlton House to their Majesties and the whole of the royal family. Haydn presided at the piano-forte, and Salomon led the band, which consisted of the same performers as at the Duke of York's. The magnificence of the scene on this occasion was truly fascinating. The exalted rank of those present, the splendour of the dresses, and the elegance and beauty of the ladies, all combined to strike the beholder with admiration and delight. I had permission that night to enter the room while the whole of the royal family (seventeen in number) were at supper. The King and

Queen sat at the head of the table, and the branches of the royal family nearest to them, according to their seniority, whilst the Prince of Wales occupied a seat opposite to his royal parents, doing the honours of his table with all that elegance for which he has ever been so highly distinguished. I frequently afterwards attended the concerts of the Prince of Wales, in one of which I played a concerted piece for the oboe, composed by Haydn, and was honoured with the distinguishing approbation of His Royal Highness, who, whilst playing the violoncello, called two foreign noblemen to him to listen, and repeatedly exclaimed "Bravi!—the finest tone in the world!" I had the satisfaction several times of meeting Haydn at Carlton House, at music parties, where, after the concert was ended, an elegant supper invited us to partake of its gratifications. The attentions we experienced at Carlton House proceeded from Mr. Bect, then maître d'hotel, successor to Mr. Weltjee, who had retired to his house and grounds at Chiswick Mall. Weltjee, who had been naturalised, kept a well-furnished table, which was frequented by several of the minor wits of the day; and he, being very proud of this little estate, felt great pleasure in showing his fields, his gardens, his hot-houses, &c., saying at the time, in his bad

English, "Dish ish moine, dat ish moine; and, what ish more, I can leave it all to my posteriors" (posterity).

On the 11th of April was produced, at Covent Garden Theatre, a new ballet of action by Mr. Byrn, author of 'Captain Cook,' and 'Oscar and Malvina,' called 'The Tithe Pig.' The overture and music (with the exception of one piece by Mr. Shield) were composed by me. In the second movement of the overture Mr. W. Ware performed a solo on the violin, for the first time, with great effect. This piece altogether experienced a very flattering reception, and had a long run.

A grand selection of sacred music, from the works of Handel, was performed in St. Margaret's church, Westminster, on the 25th of May, 1795, by command of their Majesties, for the benefit of the royal society of musicians. Among the principal singers were, Miss Parke, Miss Leak, Mrs. Harrison, Mr. Bartleman, and Signora Storace. They all exerted their superior talents with the greatest success; and Sarjant's admirable trumpet accompaniments were honoured with the approbation of his Majesty and all present. Cramer led the band, and Dr. Arnold conducted at the organ. Their Majesties, the Princesses, the Stadtholder of Holland, and the Prince and Princess

of Orange, honoured the performance with their presence. The crowd of nobility and gentry completely filled the church.

The following evening I attended a concert at the mansion of the venerable Earl B—. The singers were Mrs. Harrison and Signora Storace. The band was led by Cramer, who played a concerto on the violin in the first part: I played one on the oboe in the second. The company were numerous and fashionable of course, and the old lord evinced as much spirit and activity as if he had been only on his first legs. This nobleman, who was a witty and cheerful companion, had a son, Lord A—, who was of such a remarkably sedate disposition, that he never drank more than two glasses of wine at a sitting, and invariably retired to rest an hour before midnight. On a particular occasion, while the old earl was entertaining a party of his male friends, and was enjoying their society over the bottle, with much glee, the house clock striking the methodical hour of eleven, the young lord, who was not thirty years old, immediately arose and departed. When his son was out of the room and the door was closed, the earl, who had entered into his eightieth year, drawing his chair nearer to the table, said with great good humour, "Now, boys, fill your glasses,

for as the old gentleman is gone to bed, we young ones will pass a pleasant hour or two."

Vauxhall Gardens opened on the 5th of June with a grand gala. The concert consisted of a selection from the great masters, which was aided by the finely executed oboe concerto of the elder Parke.

Covent Garden Theatre commenced as usual for the season in September, and as the houses are not overflowing at that dull part of it, Mr. Harris had recourse to novelty, and the first new performer he engaged was Mrs. Serres, who made her first appearance on that stage on the 5th of October, in the character of Rosetta, in the opera of 'Love in a Village.' This lady's voice was not sufficiently powerful to fill the theatre, or to enable her to sustain the first line of singing parts. If Mrs. Serres by her singing did not make a great noise in the world, she some years afterwards adopted a most ridiculous mode of accom plishing that object, by assuming the title of Princess of Cumberland, and affirming that she was the legitimate daughter of his late Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland!!!

On the 10th of November was produced, at the same theatre, the musical afterpiece, in two acts, of 'The Irish mimic, or blunders at Brighton,'

written by O'Keefe: the music by Mr. Shield. The principal character in this whimsical production is an Irish adventurer, who travels to Brighton to give vocal imitations of various birds and beasts, in the true Irish style, being quite opposite to nature. This character was admirably performed by Johnstone, who, in a song, gave, amongst others, an imitation of the hog, by singing a delicate affettuoso passage, a response to which, as unlike as possible, was made by me in a brilliant bravura flourish on the oboe; at the end of which Johnstone created great laughter, by saying, "There's a beautiful hog!"

Thomas Linley, Esq., the composer, and joint patentee of the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, died at his house in Southampton Street, Covent Garden, on the 19th of November, 1795. As a musician, Mr. Linley's superior talent is well known. He did not seek to astonish; but his compositions display the utmost delicacy, simplicity, and nature, as his operas, canzonets, glees, &c. testify. As a singing master, he was almost unrivalled in England: witness the excellence of his daughter's, Mrs. Sheridan, the first singer of her time, Miss Mary Linley, afterwards married to —— Tickell, Esq., and Miss Maria Linley, who, had she not been prematurely cut off, would probably have equalled her eldest sister, Mrs.

Sheridan. Mr. Linley was very unfortunate in his domestic life, losing several of his children soon after their superior talents had been happily developed. His eldest son, Mr. Thomas Linley, junior, one of the finest violin players in Europe, being with his sister, in the summer of 1788, on a visit at the seat of the Duke of Ancaster at Grimsthorpe in Lincolnshire, a gentleman, also visiting there, proposed one morning to take a sail on the extensive lake which formed one of the ornaments of the domain. This being accepted by Mr. T. Linley, junior, they entered the vessel, which shortly afterwards upset in deep water. The proposer of the excursion clung to the boat, whilst Mr. Linley, who was an expert swimmer, made to the shore; but being encumbered with his boots, he sank to rise no more, in sight of several servants of the duke, who had assembled to afford that assistance which saved the life of his terrified companion. Mr. Linley suffered much from the premature death of his eldest son, and had scarcely recovered from that affliction when he was doomed to experience another equally severe. Mr. Samuel Linley, his second son, who, though but nineteen years old, had displayed great musical genius by his successful cultivation of the oboe, having, at the invitation of the Honourable Captain Walsingham, his father's

intimate friend, abandoned music as a profession, and entered the royal navy as a midshipman, sailed on a short cruise in the Thunderer, of seventy-four guns, commanded by that gallant officer. When the Thunderer had returned to Spithead Mr. S. Linley had leave to visit his family in London, where he was seized with a malignant fever and died; and what is very remarkable, he would not have escaped the dart of the grim tyrant Death had he survived and joined his ship again, for the Thunderer shortly afterwards set sail for a foreign destination, which she never reached, and has not to this day been heard of! Within two years after the death of Mr. S. Linley Miss Maria Linley, who, as an oratorio singer was the delight of the public, was snatched away at the age of eighteen; and in the year 1792 Mrs. Sheridan, his eldest daughter, died in the prime of life; added to which, Mr. Tickell, the husband to his second daughter, in the paroxysm of a brain-fever, threw himself from the top of his house, and was killed on the spot! This combination of misfortunes weighed so heavily on "this man of sorrow," that he was never afterwards seen to smile; or if he did sometimes make an effort, it was like the sun shooting a transient gleam through a dense cloud, which was lost again in an instant. The afflictions of

Mr. Linley were sufficient perhaps to have produced despair, had he not been supported by a strong mind, and the affectionate attentions of his wife and two surviving sons, Mr. Wm. Linley, and the Rev. Mr. O. Linley. To the credit of his memory it should be stated, that Mr. Linley was so devoid of envy, that he was not only ready to admit the talents of every rival in his art, but to contend for the merits of his contemporaries. In the ordinary relations of life he proved himself an affectionate husband, a tender father, and a man of indisputable probity and honour. His death took place within three years of that of his daughter, Mrs. Sheridan, and he was buried by her side in the cathedral church of Wells.

This summer I went to pass a fortnight at Margate. I was induced to give the preference to the Isle of Thanet, from its being generally considered a more reasonable place to live at than other watering-places. This I found was not the case; for the people of Margate have so many artful methods of making extracts from one's purse, that I question whether living at Brighton, even when the Prince of Wales was there, would be attended with greater expense. On taking possession of your apartments at Margate, the landlady very officiously presents you with keys of the different closets, and at the same time

recommends to you, as she cannot be answerable for servants, not to forget when you go out to take them with you. This precaution I adopted; but notwithstanding, the articles of tea, sugar, wine, &c., as if through some invisible agent, had vanished in large proportions. This appeared to me very mysterious, until speaking jocosely on the subject to a friend, who knew the trim of the place, he exclaimed, "The thing you speak of is common. They present you with keys for the purpose of lulling you into a fancied security, whilst with duplicate ones in their own possession they never fail during your absence to plunder you with impunity. The people, generally speaking, who let lodgings in Margate, having no other means, take a house for the purpose of living on their extortions from the end of one season to the commencement of the following, thereby proving, that although there are not any sharks to be found in the waters of Margate, there are an abundance to be met with on its land."

I passed my time notwithstanding pleasantly enough, by bathing early, walking on the cliffs and the pier, and reading the London newspapers at Garner's library. At the latter I frequently met an Irish officer of a very animated and agreeable disposition. That gentleman one morning, whilst reading a newspaper, suddenly exclaimed,

"By my faith, and there is another old friend gone!— Poor Callan!—Well, we must all attend the roll-call!" After a short pause, the tear, which had stood glistening in his eye, fell, when, rallying his spirits, he added, "On my conscience, I have lately read of so many deceased old friends in the newspapers, that I should not feel at all surprised if I was one day to read an account of the death of myself!" On the morning of the day I left Margate I met on the pier Mr. Broughton, an elderly gentleman I had known and respected for several years. He was a man of placid and amiable disposition, and though his close attention to business had somewhat marred the correctness of his phraseology, he was nevertheless a very estimable character, and, strange to say, although a citizen, had never before visited the sea-coast! Whilst walking on the new pier, which had not long been finished, I described to him the violence of that storm which had rent asunder the former one, and which thereby rendered a new one indispensable; observing also, that the new pier being much wider and longer than the old one, was considered to be a great improvement: to which he replied, in his mild way, "It is an improvement indeed:—it is an improvement for the better!" He had scarcely uttered those words when our attention was arrested by a general rush

of the promenaders to the upper end of the pier. They were attracted as it appeared by a large ship with all her canvass set, coming before the wind in fine style towards the harbour. My friend was much struck with her majestic and beautiful appearance, and having expressed his admiration repeatedly, at length ejaculated, "How wonderful are the works of nature!"—My time for departing from Margate being nearly arrived, I took leave of my friend, and repaired to my lodgings, where the stage-coach calling for me, I got into it, and set out on my journey to London.

The King's Theatre opened for the season on the 12th of December, with the heroic opera of 'La bella Arsene.' In this opera (which went off with great *éclat*) Madame Banti, Signor Roselli, and Signor Morelli, sang in the first style of excellence, and received such applause as proved they were in as high estimation as ever.

1796.

On Tuesday, the 16th of February, a new comic opera, intitled 'I Traci amanti,' in which Signora Fabrizzi made her first appearance, was produced at the King's Theatre. The voice of Signora Fabrizzi was clear and powerful, and her manner was graceful. She was much applauded. The exquisite music of this opera was composed by Cimarosa. Cramer was leader, and Badini poet.

Banti produced for her benefit, the 7th of April, Gluck's superb serious opera, 'Iphigenia in Aulide.' The transcendent music of this opera (finely sung by Banti) was honoured with unbounded applause by an elegant and overflowing audience. If the public felt indebted to Banti for the introduction of this opera, they repaid the obligation to the amount of at least a thousand pounds!

Signor Viganoni made his first appearance the 14th of June, in a new comic opera called 'Tesoro.' Viganoni's voice, though not remarkable for power, was distinguished for its sweetness; and his style of singing was fanciful and elegant. He was greatly and justly applauded. The music, composed by Mazzinghi, though it possessed no depth of science, was light and pleasing. These operas were performed with great success throughout the season.

The Chevalier Christopher Gluck (a German), who composed the opera before mentioned, 'Iphigenia in Aulide,' was a native of the Upper Palatinate, on the frontiers of Bohemia, and was born in the year 1712. The first rudiments of that art in which he afterwards acquired so much celebrity were obtained at Prague. His father dying whilst he was young, he was left almost wholly destitute, and his education was in consequence entirely neglected. So great was, however, his

love of music, that with the knowledge he had at that time acquired, he travelled from town to town, supporting himself by his talents, until he had worked his way to Vienna. In this city he was befriended by a nobleman, who took him into Italy, and had him properly instructed there. At Milan he studied under J. B. San-Martini, and produced there his first opera; and afterwards, in 1742, whilst at Venice, he composed the opera of 'Demetrius.' The celebrity he had already acquired was such, that he was recommended to Lord Middlesex as a composer to the opera in this country, and he arrived in England just before the breaking out of the rebellion in 1745. After this period the performance of operas was entirely suspended for about twelve months, on account of a public prejudice against the performers, who, being all foreigners, were chiefly Roman Catholics. The house was re-opened in 1746 with Gluck's opera of 'La Caduta dei Giganti,' which however was so unsuccessful as to be represented only five times. This failure induced him to return to Italy, where he is stated to have composed several operas in the style of the times, namely, in imitation of the works of Terradeglas, Gallupi, and Jomelli. In the year 1765 Gluck composed his famous opera of 'Orfeo,' written by Calsabigi, for the celebration

of the marriage of the Emperor Joseph the Second. This production derived considerable *éclat* from the circumstance of the Archduchess Amelia playing the part of Apollo, the Archduchesses Elizabeth, Josephine, and Charlotte, the Graces, and the Archduke Leopold presiding at the harpsichord. It was afterwards performed in public in Parma, Paris, Bologna, Naples, and London; but with much greater success on the continent than in England. In the year 1769 Gluck produced at Vienna his opera of 'Alceste,' and two years afterwards that of 'Parigi ed Helena.' About this period he was engaged to write for the theatre at Paris, and for that purpose set to music an opera taken from Racine's 'Iphigénie.' He does not, however, appear to have himself gone to Paris until the year 1774, when, at the age of sixty-two, he arrived in that city under the auspices of the late unhappy Maria Antoinette, and his opera of 'Iphigénie en Aulide' was performed. In this he accommodated himself entirely to the natural taste and style of France, far excelling their then favourite composers Lulli and Rameau. This opera excited a great degree of enthusiasm in favour of Gluck. He afterwards, however, found formidable rivals in Sacchini and Piccini, both of whom arrived in France about the same period. This rivalship gave rise to the most ani-

mated discussions. The capital and the provinces were divided in their opinion respecting these celebrated musicians: their partisans formed sects: they published innumerable epigrams against each other; until at length, as if incapable of deciding on their respective merits, the public resolved to terminate all dissensions by dividing the palm among the three competitors. Gluck's opera of 'Cythère assiegée' was composed in 1775; that of 'Alceste' in the following year; and that of 'Armide' in 1777. Not long after the performance of the latter Gluck returned to Vienna, where, in the year 1782, he was visited by the Emperor Paul Petrowitz of Russia and the Empress. Two years afterwards he was rendered incapable of writing by a paralytic stroke, under the effect of which he lingered until the 15th of November 1787, when he died, at the age of seventy-five, leaving behind him a fortune which he had accumulated, of nearly thirty thousand pounds sterling. With respect to the character of Gluck's music, it has been remarked, that it is so truly dramatic; that the airs and scenes which have the greatest effect on the stage are cold and rude in concert; and that the interest gradually excited in the audience gives to them a principal part of their force and energy. His operas, however, certainly contain a rich flow of harmony,

and in his overtures he has scarcely been equalled by any composer of his age. Marmontel says that Gluck has neither the melody, the unity, nor the charms of Pergolesi, of Gallupi, or Jomelli. His airs are wanting in those forms of pure and easy outline which, in music as in painting, distinguish the Correggios and the Raphaels. He has deservedly been well received in France. He gave to musical declamation a force, energy, and rapidity, which it never before possessed, and produced by harmony uncommon effect, though through means by which melody was often destroyed. "Gluck," says Dr. Burney, "seems so much to have been the natural musician of France, that since the best days of Rameau no dramatic composer has excited so much enthusiasm, or had his pieces so frequently performed. The Parisians fancied he had recovered the dramatic music of the ancient Greeks; that there was no other musician worth hearing; and that he was the only one in Europe who knew how to express the passions." In another place he says: "Gluck had great merit as a bold, daring, nervous composer; and as such, in his French operas, he was unrivalled. But he was not so universal as to be exclusively admired and praised at the expense of all other composers, ancient and modern. His style was peculiarly convenient to France, where

there were no good singers, and where no good singing was either expected or understood by the public in general; and where poetry was set up against music, without allowing an equality, or even an opportunity of manifesting vocal powers. Gluck, in the moments of hilarity over his bottle, was accustomed to say, that 'the French are a very good sort of people, who love music and want songs in their operas, but they have no singers;' and Sacchini being asked how his operas were executed in Paris, 'God forbid that I should ever go to hear them performed!' In Yriate's celebrated poem on the dignity and utility of music Gluck is mentioned in a manner highly flattering to his renown."

The first of ten concerts given by the proprietor of the King's Theatre took place on the 1st of February, under the title of 'The Academy of Music.' The whole strength of the operatic company was brought forward on the occasion. Jarnovicki was director and first solo player. Salomon's concert, which was weakened by the loss of Haydn, who had returned to Germany, commenced on the 18th of February in Hanover Square. The singers were Madame Mara and Mr. Braham. During the concert Salomon played a concerto on the violin, and I played one on the oboe, in which I introduced some of my newly discovered high

notes, (up to G in alto,) particularly a shake on the upper D, which was greatly applauded. On that occasion the celebrated musical historian, Doctor Burney, (a subscriber,) whose vision was very imperfect, conceiving that my elder brother, Mr. John Parke, had played as heretofore, said to his wife who was present, and who shortly afterwards informed me of it, " Mr. Parke, senior, played very finely to-night; indeed, I think I never on any former occasion heard him display so much sweetness, taste, and brilliancy." Clementi, who presided at the piano-forte, performed a sonata with his accustomed brilliancy of execution. Clementi, owing to intense study, had become an extremely absent man; so much so, that he had gone out in the morning with a black and a white stocking on; but because he had never gone out without any at all, some of his friends considered his absence mere affectation. But I am inclined to think the following fact will prove they were in error. Clementi and Crosdill were together on a visit in the summer to the Earl of Pembroke, at his fine seat at Wilton. A prominent ornament in this park is a beautiful and extensive sheet of water, in which, one sultry evening, they agreed to recreate themselves by bathing. After remaining in the water a certain time, Crosdill retired to the dressing rooms,

erected on the margin of the lake; but Clementi expressing his intention to remain longer, the former, having dressed himself, and being one of those who entertained doubts whether Clementi's absence was real or assumed, determined to embrace the opportunity which then offered of ascertaining the circumstance, and therefore privately conveyed Clementi's shirt into the house; of which frolic he informed Lord Pembroke, who appeared to enjoy the joke exceedingly. At the expiration of half an hour Clementi returned, perfectly dressed as he believed, and while he was expatiating largely on the pleasure he had received by his immersion, a gentleman and his lady (friends of the peer) arrived on an evening visit. After the usual introductions had taken place, the lady expressed a desire to hear Clementi play one of his own sonatas on the piano-forte, to which he readily assented. Having taken his seat, and fidgeted a little in his peculiar way, he played the first movement of one of his most difficult pieces, and was about to begin the adagio, when, being oppressed with heat, he unconsciously unbuttoned nearly the whole of his waistcoat, and was proceeding, when the lady, greatly surprised, hastily retired to the farthest part of the room, while Lord Pembroke, almost convulsed with laughter, apprised Clementi of his situation, who, staring

wildly, darted out of the room, and could not by any intreaties be prevailed on to rejoin the party.

The winter theatres, which were this season inclined to be musical, produced some highly successful pieces, the first of which was an opera in two acts, called 'Lock and Key;' performed, for the first time, at Covent Garden Theatre on the 6th of February. It was written by Prince Hoare, and the music was composed by Mr. Shield, at whose request I composed the overture, the second movement of which contains solos for the violin and oboe. It was received in the most favourable manner. The music of this piece is in Shield's best style, and was uncommonly effective. A few days after its production their Majesties honoured the theatre with their presence, and commanded 'Lock and Key,' with which they and the Princesses appeared to be highly gratified; and two or three days afterwards I received a message from the Princess Augusta, by Mr. Horn, her musical instructor, stating, that she would very much like to have a copy of the overture of 'Lock and Key' for the piano-forte. I immediately arranged it for that instrument, and forwarded it by Mr. Horn to her Royal Highness, who condescendingly desired him to present her compliments to me, and say, that she had played it and liked it much, and that she would the next day play it to

the King. 'Lock and Key' became very popular. At Drury Lane Theatre a new play with music, written by G. Colman, called 'The Iron Chest,' was produced on the 12th of March. The music of this piece was composed and selected by S. Storace. Some of it is excellent, particularly the glee in the first act, 'Five times by the taper's light,' finely sung by Suett, Mrs. Bland, and Signora Storace; and the concerted piece sung by the banditti in the second act, which was uncommonly effective. The composer of this piece survived its production but three days. S. Storace died of the gout, and fever in his head, on the 15th of March, in the thirty-third year of his age. It is but justice to say, that S. Storace was the first who successfully engrafted Italian music on the English drama. At the same theatre was presented, for the first time, on the 30th of April, a new opera in three acts, called 'Mahmoud, or the Prince of Persia,' written by Prince Hoare. The music was composed by the late S. Storace, with a few selections from Paesiello, Haydn, and Sarti. The singers in it were Signora Storace and Mrs. Bland, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Suett, and Mr. Braham, being his first appearance on any stage, Covent Garden and the Royalty Theatres excepted. Braham displayed a powerful and flexible tenor voice, a good shake and rapid execution.

He sang the airs allotted to him with great effect, and came off with *éclat*. This last word brings to my recollection my late valued and respected friend, Counsellor Howarth, who said to me, whilst supping with him, taking up the limb of a lobster, "If ever you feel anxious when going to play a concerto, take one of these in your pocket, and you will be sure to come off with *a claw*," *éclat*.

On the 25th of May was presented at Drury Lane Theatre, for the benefit of the widow and orphan of the late S. Storace, the composer, a dramatic cento, embracing all the musical and histrionic talent of the theatre. The house, in compliment to the memory of departed genius, presented an overflowing audience.

By command, and under the patronage of their Majesties, a grand selection of sacred music, from the works of Handel, was performed in Whitehall Chapel, on Thursday the 26th of May, 1796, for the benefit of the Royal Society of Musicians. The principal singers, Miss Parke, Miss Leak, Mr. Harrison, Mr. Braham, and Signora Storace, afforded an exquisite treat. Their Majesties and five Princesses were present, and the audience was fashionable and numerous. The chapel, fitted up in a most elegant style, corresponded admirably with the beautiful ceiling of Reubens; and the orchestra, ably led by Cramer, comprised five

hundred performers. The effect was truly imposing, and so was the expense, for the whole cost upwards of eight hundred pounds!

On the 4th of June, whilst I was dressing for the purpose of attending as usual at St. James's, to assist in the performance of the Ode to the King's birth-day, I was seized with a giddiness, occasioned by too great a determination of blood to the head, and was near falling. The unusual gravity of my countenance whilst at St. James's, proceeding from the before-mentioned cause, as I afterwards learnt, induced Sir William Parsons and some other friends to imagine that I felt some anxiety at being on the point of passing the sea on my way to Ireland, to fulfil an engagement I had made to play in the Dublin Theatre. Such a consideration most assuredly had not entered my mind; though I will confess, that to one unaccustomed to that element, serious reflections may arise in a ship, when thinking that there is but a thin plank betwixt life and eternity. However, though not quite recovered, I set out in the mail-coach, on the 17th of June, taking a packet of medicine with me, and I arrived at the hotel in Chester the following night at eleven o'clock. Being greatly fatigued, I remained there two days, which recruited my strength, and I proceeded and

slept at an inn at Conway. During supper I was regaled (according to the custom of Wales) with a concert, consisting of a harp and a bassoon. The harpist, whose thick Welsh blood rushed into his fingers whilst playing 'Of a noble race was Shenkin,' evinced great animation, although he played on a harp of so antique a structure, that it seemed to have descended to him from one of the ancient bards who had escaped the wrath of our first Edward. The performance of the bassoon player was laboured and feeble, owing perhaps to the unsightly novelty of his cheeks whilst playing, being inflated to such a degree as to rival those of fame, or Kit-Crack-Cheeks, O'Keefe's Irish trumpeter! On my arrival at Holyhead I embarked on board the packet; and after a rough passage of thirty hours arrived in safety at the Marine Hotel, Dublin, without a vestige of my previous indisposition. My engagement with Mr. Daly, the proprietor of the Crow Street Theatre, being only for a limited number of nights, I rested two days; and on the evening of the third performed for the first time in the opera of 'The Duenna, (Clara by Miss Poole,) which affording ample scope for the display of my instrument, the oboe, my efforts were rewarded with loud and reiterated applause. I performed also occasional

concertos with equal success. Mr. Daly, the manager, was a gentlemanly man, but was not much acquainted with music, as the following curious circumstance will show:—At the rehearsal of an opera in which I played, Daly, observing the persons who played the two French horns occasionally leave off, and conceiving that it proceeded from inattention, hastened to the front of the stage, close to the orchestra, and addressing them with much warmth, said,—"Gentlemen horn-players, why don't you play on as the others do? What do you mean by stopping?"—"Sir," said one of them, "we have twenty bars rest."—"Rest!" said Daly, "what do you mean by rest? I can get no rest in this theatre, and, by Jasus, you shan't."

During my three weeks' stay in Dublin I received polite attentions from several distinguished persons, amongst which was an invitation to dine from the celebrated Counsellor Curran, afterwards master of the rolls. This invitation, I even now regret to say, I was unable to accept, owing to a prior engagement I had to an evening-party at the house of Lord Northland, given by his son, the Honourable Mr. Knox. Mr. Curran, whose wit was brilliant and his eloquence commanding, in a party at a friend's house met Sir John Stephen-

son, the composer, who had very recently been knighted. After supper, singing being general, Sir John, the new knight, being called on for a song, hesitated, and observed that he scarcely knew what song to sing; on which Mr. Curran facetiously said,—"What do you think, Sir John, of 'The traveller benighted?'"

I was highly gratified by viewing some of the beautiful scenes of nature, for which the vicinity of Dublin is so justly celebrated. Among these were the great Dargle, the Salmon-leap at Lexlip, and the Black Rock. The latter affords a delightful prospect of Dublin Bay, thought to be the finest in Europe, the Bay of Naples excepted.

Having finished my engagement in Dublin, I left that city in company with Mr. Bowden, the singer of Covent Garden Theatre, for Limerick, one hundred Irish miles off, in the passage-boat which went from Dublin to Monstereven, thirty miles. We had an excellent dinner on board, and good claret, though each person was stinted to a pint, in consequence of an accident which had some time before happened, attended with loss of life, and which was attributed to the inebriation of those on board. This restriction was so rigidly enforced, that I could only obtain a second pint by accidentally having my purse in my hand,

which the steward eyeing, he said to me, like a good casuist, "Though I dare not break the oath I have taken, by letting you have an extra pint of claret, if you choose to order one for your servant (I had none) you may, for that way (taking the *douceur*) the laws of the vessel will not be violated, and it therefore matters not to me a pinch of Lundyfoot who drinks it." We arrived at Monstereven, in the county of Kildare, about nine in the evening; and there being but one good inn, and that none of the largest, it was quite crammed. Within an hour afterwards we sat down to supper, with three or four of our fellow-passengers, among whom were Lee Lewis, a former celebrated comedian, and his son, who we did not know till then had been on board the boat. Lee Lewis was very entertaining, and amused us with some of his whimsical stories, among which was his Warwickshire schoolmaster. "When I was at Aston in Warwickshire," said he, "I was introduced to a schoolmaster of the village, who was so proud of the progress which one of his pupils had made in orthography, that he afforded me an opportunity of witnessing it. The word he selected for the display was the name of the great manufacturing town in the neighbourhood, Birmingham, which the boy, to the admiration of his master, spelt in the following manner:

Birm———Brum,
ing————idge
Brumidge,
ham————um,
Brumidgeum!"

Not conceiving that there would be any scarcity of conveyances, we deferred ordering a post-chaise until morning, when we were called at six o'clock; and, to our great surprise, we learnt that every carriage had been bespoke during the previous evening, and had departed. This was to me and my companion astounding intelligence, for we were to perform at Limerick the following evening; and, it being near the commencement of the races there, we were aware of the difficulty there would be of procuring horses, &c. We therefore made another effort as a *dernier ressort*, by inquiring of the landlord if there were any other means by which he could enable us to proceed. He replied, that he could provide us with horses if we would put up with the old chaise then standing under the shed; and, like drowning men who catch at a straw, we agreed to this, and retired into the house to breakfast, whilst the chaise was getting ready. By the time we had finished our meal the carriage (a beautiful set out) was at the door. It had four horses to it, all which were such miserable hacks as would have required a number equal to the

team of our York waggons to have got on with even a small degree of celerity; and the "Nimrods" who bestrode them looked, as Falstaff says, "as if they had been taken down from a gibbet." We, however, set off for Maryborough, the shire town of Queen's County; and from the pace being such, that we might have been distanced by an active snail, and there not being a single glass to the windows of the chaise, during a heavy fall of rain, we were wet through before we arrived there. After a short stay to refresh the poor hacks, we jogged on thus till the evening, when, in descending a trifling declivity, within half a mile of Borris in Ossory, the two leaders went down like shot, compelling us to walk to the inn, which looked more like the house of a farmer than one for public accommodation. On entering, however, tired and disgusted with our day's journey, we ordered beds, and inquired what we could have for supper; to which the woman who attended replied, "Faith, gentlemen, you may have just what you plaise:" and on being desired to bring a bill of fare she departed, and we saw no more of her till an hour had elapsed, when, on the bell being rung, she returned and informed us that there was nothing to be had but a corned shoulder of mutton. She was proceeding, like Boniface, to enumerate the luxuries she could have set before us on such and

such a day, when we cut her short by desiring her to bring Ireland's favourite dish, which, when placed on the table, exhibited little more than the anatomy of one of the shoulders in question. This disappointment was vexatious, from our being hungry as well as fatigued; but as there was no other inn in the place, there was no resource, and we retired to rest. It may be observed, that travelling in Ireland differs greatly from that in England. In England, when you arrive at an inn, you are received by the master or mistress of the house with the utmost attention. At dinner or supper the landlord places the first dish on the table, remaining in attendance for a short time, to see that all things are properly arranged. In Ireland, when your carriage stops at an inn-door, the man of the house, together with his wife and daughters, like rabbits in a warren, come out to take a peep, then run back to their holes, and you see no more of them. At four o'clock the following morning we left Borris in Ossory for Roscrea, county of Tipperary, a distance of six miles, which, with four horses, we accomplished in two hours! When we had arrived at Roscrea (a considerable town), one of the horses it was discovered had cast a shoe, which, owing to the farrier being out of the way, caused a delay of an hour. He was at length found in the public house, out of which

he sallied with a smiling countenance, exclaiming, —"Here I am, my jewel; I have only been knocking another nail into my coffin" (viz. taking another glass of whisky). This jolly vulcan, who was as rosy as the parish priest, brought from his forge a shoe for the poor horse, who, being sorely fagged with the preceding work, was so overcome with sleep, that when the blacksmith's man lifted up his hind leg to fit it on, he literally laid down upon him. Without any further disasters, we arrived in the evening at Nenagh, and at Limerick at night, when the performances at the theatre were ended, being, as they say in that country, "just time enough to be too late." Limerick is a large and populous city, having an old and new town: the latter is very handsome. It has a noble bridge over the river Shannon; and its climate is so remarkably damp, that scarcely a day passes without showers of rain descending, which the natives say are the tears which Saint Patrick sheds for the sins of the people. The women of Limerick, like our Lancashire witches, are proverbially handsome. Limerick is also famous for strong whisky, fine salmon, and mealy turkies! I was present at the Limerick races, where I beheld a gratifying, though perhaps a rude scene. The course, which is in an extensive valley, exhibited a long range of booths for the accommodation of

the visitors, in a tent-like style, embellished with painted signs of various figures, as a boot, a pig, a gridiron, &c., reminding one of Tenier's celebrated Dutch fair; while the scene was beautifully diversified by the surrounding eminences, being adorned with the wives and daughters of the farmers of the county, whose naturally good countenances were considerably heightened by their universal costume of blue and scarlet cloaks, and white starched cocked-up caps, in the distance resembling a profusion of sweet comfits regularly disposed on a dessert cake. The race of the last day was for the Hunters' Stakes, for which, among others, a horse of Lord Barrymore's ran, rode by his lordship's brother. This fine animal, when just at the winning-post, either from the anxiety of its rider, or his want of skill in jockeyship, was thrown down; but luckily fell sufficiently forward to win the race. This was literally tumbling into a good thing!

At Limerick we joined Mr. Ashe and Mr. Yaniewicz, the well-known performers on the flute and violin, who, together with myself, performed in a concert given by Mr. Daly in the theatre there, to the thinnest audience I ever beheld, inasmuch as it consisted of only four persons, viz. one gentleman in the pit, (who was there when the concert began,) and Lord Barrymore, his

brother, and Mr. Bellamy, the singer, (on a visit to them,) who came into the boxes just before it ended. I was at a loss to account for this almost total desertion of the public, it being the race week, and the place uncommonly full of company, till I was informed that Mr. Daly had promised to send there a theatrical company, and that not having kept his word, the nobility and gentry had in resentment agreed not to attend any other species of performance. That the higher classes might have come to such a determination, I did not doubt; but what had deterred the inhabitants of that large and populous city from being present I could not conceive, unless it was that the climate of Limerick, though proverbially damp, was not sufficiently so to wet [whet] their appetites for music.

From Limerick we set out for Cork, to give some concerts for the account of Mr. Daly in the theatre in that city. We stopped to breakfast in a town called Bruff, (inhabited by those people called "White Boys,") ten miles from Limerick. Our breakfast consisted of tea, coffee, eggs, bread, and home-made butter, the latter of which the man of the house termed *princely*. Though his butter was not such as might with propriety be called so, it was sure enough high in *rank;* so much so that I could not eat of it. Having

finished our meal, Mr. Bowden, who was more acquainted with the customs of the country than myself, left the parlour, which looked on the road, to inquire why the post-chaise, which had been ordered to be ready for some time, had not come to the door. The " man of the house" replied, " On my faith, it is all owing to that idle serving-man of mine, who is such a sloth, that if he had a flea biting him on the cheek, he would be too lazy to put up his hand to drive it away." While this was going on, one of the troop of beggars, who in Ireland infest the doors of an inn, a tall, rawboned fellow, with a tremendous *shillelah* in his hand, (who had witnessed our arrival,) continued marching forwards and backwards before the windows, casting a grim look through them, sufficient to have blighted all the roses, had there been any there. On lifting up the sash of one of them, I laid a sixpence on its ledge, which the fellow would not take up, saying repeatedly in a growling voice, " Take it up again; it's not enough!" Recollecting that I was alone amongst a set of miscreants who had a very short time previously hanged a respectable magistrate for some fancied offence, I hesitated for a moment, but at length, despising the insolence of the fellow, I took the sixpence back again, and shut down the window; on which the ruffian, together with seve-

ral of his associates, endeavoured to force themselves into the room in which I was (for what purpose I know not); but were repulsed by my friend, "the man of the house," and his servants. On the chaise coming to the door it was instantly surrounded by the whole fraternity of mendicants, some of whom being paralysed, blind, blear-eyed, and leprous, presented a spectacle truly disgusting. On getting into the carriage we gave them some money; but as they perhaps thought it insufficient, I discovered, after having ridden a mile or two, that one of them, probably he who had all the time stood weeping, had borrowed my bandana silk handkerchief to wipe his eyes with. We stopped to sleep at Charleville, county of Cork; and as going to bed supperless at an inn insures damp sheets, we ordered a roasted fowl, &c. to be prepared immediately. After waiting an hour, we inquired of "the man of the house" the cause of the delay. He told us it was occasioned by the trick his turn-spit dog had played him, who, on seeing us alight from the post-chaise, instantly made off, and could not be found, till after half an hour's search he was discovered in an outhouse, hid amongst a pile of faggots! The sagacity of the dog pleased us so much, that we went to the kitchen to look at him. The little animal, who had probably re-

ceived a beating, looked at us piteously, whilst with tears in his eyes he worked hard, as if desirous to atone for his fault by penitence and industry. In the morning we proceeded on our journey, and had an opportunity of viewing the ruins of the abbey of St. Francis, at Buttevant, whose surrounding walls are wholly composed of human bones! and the pretty town of Mallow, the Bath of Ireland. At Cork we performed in three concerts with great *éclat*. During the time I remained in Cork I was waited on at my lodgings by a deputation from the committee for managing the annual benefit for the hospital, to request me to play a concerto on that occasion, which I did with unfeigned pleasure. That the Irish gentry cannot be justly accused of a lack of attention to public characters, the following instance of politeness will prove. A gentleman, whose name at this distance of time I regret to say I cannot perfectly recollect, but whose domain was in the vicinity of Cork, invited Messrs. Ashe, Yaniewicz, Bowden, and myself, to make an aquatic excursion with him in his yacht to the cove of Cork, one of the finest harbours for shipping, and one of the strongest fortifications, both by art and nature, perhaps in Europe. This invitation being accepted, we sailed down the river to the cove, and were induced to pass the fortified gut, and to

make a trip of four or five leagues on the Atlantic Ocean, after which we returned to the cove, where we cast anchor, and sat down in the cabin to an elegant cold collation, passing a couple of hours with as much satisfaction as we could have done at the City of London Tavern. In the evening we returned to Cork up the river Lee, whose banks are richly adorned with the elegant seats of many of the nobility and gentry, among which the Marquis of Thomond's is eminently conspicuous. At Cork I separated from my musical friends, Messrs. Ashe and Yaniewicz, and left in the mail-coach for Dublin, in company with the well-known singers Messrs. Bowden and Townshend, of Covent Garden Theatre. We slept that night at Kilkenny, that famous city, where, according to Garrick's Irish gentleman in the 'Jubilee,' are to be found

> Fire without smoke,
> Wit without joke,
> Puddings without eggs,
> Rabbits without legs. (Welsh ones.)

The following morning we resumed our journey at an early hour, and during its progress we were much amused with the following whimsical circumstance: When the mail-coach stopped to change horses in a small town two or three stages

from Kilkenny, Mr. Bowden happening to call me by name rather audibly, a man of decent appearance, who had lost a leg, and looked like an old weather-beaten sailor, was standing before the door of the inn, mistaking Parke for Parker, a very common thing by the by, would have it that I was the gallant admiral of that name, "an honour which I never dreamed of," and with great animation several times shouted out, "Admiral Parker for ever!" The noise he made brought the man of the house, the servants, &c., to take a peep at the Admiral, who all imbibing the sailor's error, the coach actually drove off amidst a general huzza for Admiral Parker! Arriving in Dublin the same evening, we were joined at the Marine Hotel by those excellent comedians Mr. Lewis (one of the patentees of Covent Garden Theatre) and Mr. Munden, who had been performing at Daly's theatre in Crow Street, and, after having taken supper, we entered a boat just before the door and departed for the packet; and clearing the bay at two o'clock, A. M., we were, after a fine passage before the wind of only seven hours, safely landed at Holyhead. After having taken breakfast at Holyhead we departed in a post-chaise through the Island of Anglesea (the ancient Mona) to the city of Bangor; and having crossed the ferry, we dined in the

evening at the hotel, where our fatigues were alleviated by as good and elegantly served up a dinner as could be given at any hotel in England. Added to which, the harpist, whose strings vibrated most agreeably, was of a very superior order. At this house we took up our abode for the night, and in the morning left Bangor for Shrewsbury. It is said the people of Shrewsbury having rendered some important services to the state in former times, the monarch caused it to be intimated to them that they might be incorporated; to which the proud Salopians replied, that they preferred remaining the largest town in England, rather than to be the smallest city. As we were entering the town of Shrewsbury, one of my two theatrical friends, who was a punster of such magnitude, that at first sight you might fancy you saw a pun-*stir*, addressing me, said, "Are not the natives of this town reckoned very silly people?"—"O no!" said I; "I have always considered them quite the reverse."—"Indeed!" said he; "you must surely be in error, for it is almost proverbial that Shrewsbury is remarkable for *cakes!*" Soon after our arrival at the inn we sat down to dinner. At the head of the table, at which I had been requested to place myself, was a fine cod's head and shoulders, with oyster sauce: whilst helping my punning friend

to a part of it, I asked him if he would take some of the sound, as it appeared to be very fine. He replied, " Yes, with all my heart, as you recommend it; for you are a sort of fishmonger yourself, and must be a good judge, being a dealer in sounds." From Shrewsbury we proceeded in the mail-coach through Birmingham, the seat of the Cyclops, and Oxford, the seat of the Muses, and afterwards arrived safe in London. I forgot to state, that when Munden, the admired comedian, had landed at Holyhead from Dublin, he displayed so much of the *amor patriæ*, that he bowed his head with much solemnity, and " kissed his mother earth" with unfeigned fervency.

Mrs. Second, late Miss Mahon, a lady well known and admired as a concert singer, made her first appearance on any stage at Covent Garden Theatre, on the 17th of September, in the character of Emily in the opera of ' The Woodman,' in which she introduced a song with an obligato accompaniment for the clarionet, finely performed by her brother, Mr. Mahon. This lady's voice was rich, powerful, and of great compass. She sang up to F natural in alt, with ease, and her style was of a superior order. Her singing was inferior only to Mrs. Billington's.

The King's Theatre opened for the season on the 26th of November, with the favourite opera by

Gretry, called 'Zemira e Azor.' Mr. Braham made his first appearance at that theatre in the character of Azor. Ali was sustained by Signor Morelli, and Zemira by Madame Banti. Braham and Madame Banti (says a critic) sang charmingly; but the former should have studied acting.

Signor Felici Giardini, the celebrated violin player, whose extraordinary talents made a conspicuous figure in England for upwards of thirty years, died at Moscow at an advanced age, on the 17th of December, 1796. At the time Giardini first came to England, in 1749, music was in such an unsettled state, that when a nobleman or gentleman intended to treat his friends with a concert, he generally sent his steward or butler to engage the musicians, who haggled with them for price, as they would for meat at the butcher's shambles. This Giardini put an end to; and having the direction of the Italian opera and all other principal musical undertakings, he regulated the terms of performances according to the different grades of talent. In fact he reformed the profession greatly, by doing away that silly importance which pervaded the members of the old school, as the following instance will show. Although the terms in music are derived from more languages than one, it does not necessarily follow that a professor

of the art who uses them should be a linguist, any more than an apothecary a Latin scholar because he can read the prescriptions of a physician. In many cases, however, vanity assumes a ridiculous degree of knowledge, though built on equally slight foundations. Many years ago at the annual representation of one of the Latin comedies of Terence, by the Westminster Scholars, an old musician named Reeve, who among his friends went by the familiar appellation of Jemmy Reeve, being present, and laughing heartily at the scene before him, Lord H——, a musical amateur, addressing him, said, "You appear to be greatly entertained with the wit of Terence, Mr. Reeve. Of course you understand his language?"—"O yes, my lord," replied Jemmy Reeve, "we are obliged to understand different languages."

Giardini, who was an excellent composer as well as violin player, had delighted the public, and was without a rival till Cramer arrived in this country. He was however a man of haughty and capricious disposition, and his vanity being continually flattered by the marked attentions he received from the haut ton, among whom he lived, he was led to imagine that there was no rank in life, however exalted, that would not be proud of his association, as the following instance will

show. The late Duke of Cumberland being a great admirer of Giardini's superior talent, once engaged him to attend his music parties during a week at his lodge in Windsor Great Park. When Giardini arrived there, before leaving his carriage, he inquired of Mr. Waterhouse, the principal page, where he was to sleep during his stay there. The answer being satisfactory, he next inquired where he was to dine? On being informed that this was to be at the pages' table, he appeared to be greatly disappointed; and on its being explained to him that no part of his Royal Highness's establishment, the equerry and chaplain excepted, were admitted to his table, he replied, "Oh, very well, when you want me, you'll find me at the White Hart in Windsor;" and drove off immediately. It would be difficult to account for Giardini's conduct on that occasion, as it was well known that no professional man had at that period enjoyed the honour he aimed at:—no! it was reserved for his Royal Highness George, Prince of Wales, through his liberality and condescension, to burst the barrier which had kept the arts at a chilling distance; and through its hitherto impervious portal, to admit some talented men to the high distinction of sitting at his royal table. Giardini, however, at times could not only relax the severity of his disposition, but also

enter into a joke with great good humour. Whilst he led the band of the King's Theatre there was an Italian composer of great ability named Giordani, who played the harpsichord in it, and whose name, it will be perceived, differed from that of Giardini only in two letters. The embarrassments of the former occasioning a sheriff's officer to enter the pit one night, during the performance of the second act of an opera, Giordani instantly left the Theatre. Giardini's name being very popular, the bailiff, impressed with it, asked one of the violin players, as he stood close to the orchestra, if the name of the gentleman on the high seat was Giardini. Being answered in the affirmative, he sat quietly down, not doubting but he should soon have an opportunity of making his caption. At the end of the opera Giardini, who had been necessarily informed of the cause of Giordani's absence, on passing by where the officer stood, was civilly accosted by him, and informed that there was a writ against him. Giardini, a good deal surprised, soon recovered his presence of mind, and during a minute's pause, having determined to carry on the equivoke, said, with a smile, "Very well, I will go with you." He then selected two of his musical friends, who were in the secret, and accompanied the officer to a well-known mansion in Chancery Lane, most

appropriately yclep'd a sponging-house, where he ordered an elegant supper. Giardini and his friends having passed a couple of hours very agreeably, sent for the master of the house, the officer, and desired to see the writ, which being produced, he pointed out the difference betwixt his name and Giordani's, which appeared on the face of it, assuring him at the same time that he would bring an action against him for false imprisonment. The astounded bailiff, aware of the unpleasant predicament into which his error had placed him, having offered every apology, and positively refusing to receive any remuneration for the supper, Giardini, who thought he had inflicted sufficient punishment, advised him to be more circumspect in future, got into a hackney coach with his companions, and drove home, highly amused with the adventure. Giardini, when he left England the second time, in 1792, went with his pupil Signora Laurenti (who had failed at the King's Theatre) to St. Petersburg, to give Italian burlettas. But not succeeding in that city, he proceeded to Moscow, where he was equally unsuccessful, and died of a dropsical complaint, in great indigence It is remarkable that Giardini died on the same day and in the same hour in which the empress departed this life; as if death, in accordance with his living ambition,

had determined to place him on an equality with one of the most puissant personages that ever assumed the reins of a government, the great Catherine, Autocrat of all the Russias.

1797.

A new serious opera, called 'Evelina,' was produced at the King's Theatre on Saturday the 21st of January. The music, the last composition of the celebrated Sacchini, was throughout in that composer's usual elegant and finished style. Banti, Braham, and Viganoni, exerted themselves with uncommon ability, as if to do justice to the memory of the composer. The trio at the end of the first act, and the finale at the end of the second, were deservedly encored. Antonio Sacchini of Naples arrived in England in the year 1772, after having composed for all the great theatres in Italy and Germany with wonderful success. Here he vindicated the high reputation he had acquired on the continent. His operas of the 'Cid,' and 'Tamerlano,' were equal, if not superior, to most of the musical dramas performed in any part of Europe. Indeed each of these dramas was so entire, so masterly, and yet so new and natural, that there was nothing to criticise; but there were innumer-

able beauties to admire. It is evident that this composer had so exquisite a taste, and was so totally free from pedantry, that he was frequently new without effort, never thinking of himself or his fame for any particular excellence, but totally occupied with the ideas of the poet, and the propriety, consistency, and the effect of the whole drama. His accompaniments, though always rich and ingenious, never divert attention from the voice; but the principal melody is invariably rendered distinguishable through all the contrivance of imitative and picturesque design in the instruments. His dramatic works amounted, in the year 1778, to seventy-eight in number, and by the many masses and motets which he composed, while he remained at Venice, in the character of Maestro dell' Ospidaletto Conservatorio, he manifested as much competency to write for the church as for the stage. He remained too long in England for his fame and fortune. The first was injured by cabals, and by what ought to have increased it, the number of his works; and the second by inactivity and want of economy. "Upon a difference with Rauzzini," says Dr. Burney, "this singer, from a friend, became his foe, declaring himself to be the author of the principal songs in all the late operas to which Sacchini had set his name; and threatening to

make affidavit of it before a magistrate. The utmost of this accusation that can be looked upon as true, may have been that during Sacchini's severe fit of the gout, when he was called upon for his operas before they were ready, he employed Rauzzini, as he and others had done Anfossi in Italy, to fill up the parts, set some of the recitatives, and perhaps compose a few of the airs for the under singers. The story, however, gained ground, and was propagated by his enemies, though always disbelieved and contemned by his friends, and by the reasonable part of the public. In the summer of 1781 Sacchini went first to Paris, where he was almost adored; but, after increasing his reputation there by new productions, he returned in the following year to London, where he only augmented his debts and embarrassments; so that, in 1784, he took a final leave of this country, and settled in Paris, where he not only obtained a pension from the Queen of France, but the theatrical pension, in consequence of three successful pieces. The last of Sacchini's works was the opera of 'Evelina,' founded on an interesting event in the history of the ancient princes of Wales. This graceful, elegant, and judicious composer died, however, before it could be performed, at Paris, in September 1786. He was honoured with a public funeral, and every

mark of respect and distinction which sensibility and gratitude could bestow on a person who had contributed so largely to the public pleasures."

The serious opera called 'Alceste' was represented on the 18th of May, under the patronage of the Prince of Wales and the Dukes of York and Clarence, and under the direction of twelve stewards, among whom were the Dukes of Bedford, Leeds, &c. &c., for the benefit of the widows and orphans of the brave men who perished, and for those that were wounded in the glorious action of the preceding 14th of February, under Admiral Sir John Jervis, off Cape St. Vincent. Had the King's Theatre been twice as large, it would have been filled on that occasion. Similar benefits were afterwards given at the two winter theatres, &c. with like success. To the immortal honour of the British people, they are, in the cause of their intrepid defenders, quickly and simultaneously embodied; and whilst their generous natures impel them to afford relief, the gift is not rendered less valuable by being bedewed with humanity's tear. An instance of a charitable feeling of a different kind took place at the same theatre a few nights after the benefit just described. There was an Italian of ability belonging to the Opera House, of the name of Badini, who had for several years been retained there as

poet. This man's affairs being, like those of many of his brother poets, very much deranged, he was frequently arrested, on which occasions a subscription had been opened among the singers and musicians of the establishment to relieve him. These applications had been so numerous, that latterly they subscribed with great reluctance, and expressed a determination to do so no more. A fortnight however had not elapsed, when, at the Tuesday night's opera, Badini's friend came with a doleful countenance to make another collection, stating that poor Badini was dead, and that the money then wanted was for the purpose of burying him. This had the desired effect of inducing them to open their purse, and make up the sum required. But who can describe their surprise when, at the following Saturday night's opera, they beheld Badini in new mourning, (for himself no doubt,) seated in the centre of the pit, and amusing himself with all the *nonchalance* imaginable, with his opera-glass and snuff-box! This last donation was aptly termed Badini's *resurrection* money.

The oratorios commenced at Covent Garden Theatre on the 3rd of March. The vocal performers were Madame Mara, Miss Poole, Messrs. Kelly, Bartleman, (vice Reinhold, who had retired,) Braham, and Signora Galli, who, at the

age of seventy-five, sang the air 'He was despised,' which was originally composed for her by Handel, and which she sung when 'The Messiah' was first performed in 1742. The old lady acquitted herself better than could have been expected, and the audience kindly dealt her out a flattering portion of applause. At the end of the first part Mr. C. Ashley performed a concerto on the violoncello with great ability, and at the end of the second I played a concerto on the oboe, in which was introduced 'Auld Robin Gray.' They were both much applauded. It may not be generally known that this popular ballad ('Auld Robin Gray') is not an original Scottish tune; it owes its birth to an accomplished female of modern times, who wrote the poetry, and composed the music to it, Lady Caroline Fordyce.

By the secession of Reinhold, Mr. Bartleman, the admirable bass singer at the Concert of Ancient Music, came into an extensive line of practice. His fine deep-toned voice, and the chaste style of his singing, afforded a high gratification to the musical public. Reinhold, by his talent, industry, and extreme frugality, acquired a handsome independence. Hooke the composer informed me, that during a severe frost in January, whilst the snow was lying upon the ground, he and his wife went by invitation to take a Sunday

dinner with Reinhold, and when the coach had arrived at the door, and the coachman had knocked, it was opened by Reinhold himself, who held in his hand a little broom, with which, before they were admitted, he carefully swept their shoes, fearing that they might, whilst passing from the carriage to his threshold, have taken up some snow which might injure his carpets. That Reinhold suffered his habits of economy to supersede one of the finer feelings of nature, gratitude, will be exemplified by the following fact. His father, who was a singer at Vauxhall Gardens in the year 1745, and a member of the Society of Musicians, which was founded in 1738, dying in bad circumstances, while his son was very young, the latter became a ward of that society, and was subsequently placed under the master of the young gentlemen of the choir of the Chapel Royal at St. James's, whereby was laid the foundation of his future good fortune. Reinhold, who had been for many years a member of the society, (first styled the Royal Society in 1786,) in his worldly concerns never losing sight of the *little broom*, when about to retire, said to the collector who had called on him for his annual subscription, (one guinea,) "Mr. Harwood, as I can now do without the society, and the society can do without me, you

may strike my name out of your books, as I no longer consider myself a member."

The opera concerts began this season under the direction of Viotti. Banti, and the rest of the opera singers, by the variety of their styles, produced great effect and corresponding applause. Viotti executed a concerto on the violin in a finished and masterly manner, and Dussek, one on the piano-forte, which in brilliancy and taste was never surpassed. Salomon's concert expired with the last season. The concert of ancient music, which was honoured with the presence of their Majesties, commenced on the 18th of February at Tottenham Street; and the vocal concert began the season, with the greatest success, on the 27th of the same month at Willis's Rooms.

At the English theatres nothing material was produced, excepting a new opera in three acts, at Covent Garden Theatre, on the 25th of April, intitled 'The Italian Villagers,' written by Prince Hoare. The overture and music to this piece, which evinced great taste, was composed by Mr. Shield, and, owing to a misunderstanding between him and Mr. Harris, proved his last, at least for several years, as he withdrew himself at the end of the season.

At the house of a musical friend where I assisted in a quartet, I lately met Holcroft, the

author of the admirable comedy of 'The Road to Ruin,' 'The Follies of a Day,' &c. On that occasion he aimed at singularity, and was successful. Amongst others of his new-fangled systems was that of considering pain not to be corporeal, but imaginary. Holcroft, whilst walking one day through Bond Street with Mr. Crosdill, the celebrated violoncello player, the latter being suddenly seized with a spasmodic attack, Holcroft (broaching his new system) said to him with a confident smile, "What is the matter?" To which Crosdill replied, "I feel such excruciating pain from the cramp, that I am unable to put my foot to the ground."—"Pooh, pooh, nonsense," cried Holcroft, (attempting to pull him on,) "there is no such thing as pain; pain exists only in the imagination!" Within six weeks afterwards, while the same persons were passing along Oxford Street, Holcroft was taken suddenly ill, and was unable to proceed, when being asked by Crosdill what ailed him, he replied, "I don't exactly know, but I feel great pain."—"Oh," said Crosdill, retorting on him, "there is no such thing as pain; pain exists only in the imagination!" Holcroft, being fortunately near his own house, was taken into it, and his malady proved to be paralytical. He however recovered from the affliction with which he had been visited, and

lived many years afterwards, still indulging in his principles; but at length, like many others of his class, he had his daughters (two grown-up young women) christened at his bed-side a few hours before he expired!

Vauxhall Gardens opened on the 19th of May, with a grand 'Ridotto al fresco.' The gardens on this occasion were splendidly illuminated; a grand concert of vocal and instrumental music was performed, at the end of which bands of wind instruments played in different parts of the Gardens, and a large temporary saloon was erected for dancing. The company, who appeared in strict evening dresses, were very numerous and elegant; and the splendour and novelty of the scene proved so attractive, as to detain them till a late hour. The first ridotto (not al fresco) given in this country was at the Opera House in the year 1722. It is described in the 'Freeholders' Journal' of that day in the following manner: "It was opened with twenty-four select songs from the late operas, which lasted about two hours, after which the company passed over a bridge, from the pit to the stage, where a duke and duchess led up the ball, which lasted till daylight the next morning."

At Covent Garden Theatre Madame Mara,

who was engaged for twelve nights, at enormous terms, appeared on the 25th of October, in the character of Polly in the 'Beggar's Opera.' Incledon was the Macheath, and Mrs. Martyr played Lucy. Mara sang the airs of Polly in great perfection, and was vehemently applauded; and the duets between Polly and Lucy, by Madame Mara and Mrs. Martyr, were deservedly applauded and loudly encored. In the songs of Macheath Incledon was unrivalled.

The King's Theatre opened for the season, November 25th, with a new serious opera, called 'Iper Mistri.' Banti and Viganoni were as usual excellent. Viotti was, for the first time, leader of the band and director of the orchestra. It was said that Banti had for some time been privately exerting the power she had acquired at the King's Theatre to remove Cramer, its excellent leader of the band, in order to place her countryman, Viotti, in his situation; and the articles of the former having expired at the close of the last season, she accomplished her object. Banti was so great a favourite with the haut ton, that they paid no attention to any one else. They listened with delight to her songs, and chatted and laughed during the others, asking, with a negligent surprise when the curtain fell, "Is the opera ended?"

1798.

Sacchini's serious opera 'Evelina' was performed at the King's Theatre; and on Tuesday the 26th of January a new comic opera, called 'La Scola dei maritati,' was produced. The music was by Martini. In this opera Signora Angelelli made her first appearance in England. This lady's voice, though by no means powerful, had great flexibility, and her execution was tasteful and pleasing. Morelli and Viganoni appeared to great advantage in Martini's charming music. A new serious opera was produced on Saturday the 24th of February, intitled 'Cinna,' the music of which was composed in this country by Bianchi. It is scientific, original, and pleasing; and, aided by such singers as Banti and Viganoni, it could not fail affording gratification to the admirers of the art. The band was that night led by Salomon, Viotti, who began the season, having been ordered, under the alien act, to leave the country by the 4th of March. To rebut the charges made against him, Viotti made an affidavit, which he published, wherein he declared that he "frequented no coffee-houses, belonged to no clubs, and had never in any situation uttered a word which could be deemed offensive to the British government." On the other hand it was said,

that he had been in the revolutionary army, and had uttered intemperate expressions against the memory of the late Queen of France, Marie Antoinette. Whether the latter was true or not I could not ascertain, but it was well known that he had enjoyed the patronage of that unfortunate princess for many years, and lost it through the violence of his ungovernable temper. Viotti was commanded by the queen to play before the royal family; but being interrupted in his performance by the noise made at the entrance of the Count d'Artois, he evinced his indignation, by breaking off abruptly and leaving the room.

I cannot refrain stating here an extraordinary coincidence which occurred at Covent Garden Theatre. On the day the news arrived in London of the decapitation of Louis the Sixteenth, (which took place on the 21st of January 1793,) their Majesties George the Third and his Queen, were to have been present at a play commanded by them at that house, and the royal box had been prepared as usual in the early part of the day; but the official intelligence of that event, which prevented their Majesties being present, not having been received until the afternoon, the King's box remained up, though it was unoccupied during the performances. A short time subsequently to the 16th of October in the same year, the

day of the death of the Queen of France, (a distance from the former of nine months,) their Majesties had again signified their intention to honour the same theatre with their presence; when the news of that mournful event arriving in London, at a similar time of day as the foregoing, a like disappointment was experienced by the public, and the royal box again remained empty during the evening.

On Saturday the 21st of April Signor Benelli, from Naples, made his first appearance in London, in Cimarosa's comic opera of 'Il matrimonio segreto.' Benelli displayed a fine flexible voice with a sufficient degree of strength, and he executed the most difficult passages with brilliancy and ease. His style, however, was rather too florid. He was generally and greatly applauded. The company was now strong, both in the serious and the comic opera.

The opera concerts commenced at the King's Theatre on Monday the 5th of February. The singers were, as before, those belonging to the opera company; the orchestra consisted of the opera band.

I had for some time till lately been in the habit of giving instructions on the German flute to Mr. Sperling, a gentleman who had retired from business with a handsome fortune, and who,

though a widower of sixty years of age, had had the courage to take for a second wife a buxom young widow of thirty. They lived tolerably well together for a time, notwithstanding the disparity of their ages. Their harmony was, however, at length interrupted by the clatter of the lady's tongue, which was incessantly exerted to induce her spouse to make his will, not only in her favour, but in her presence also. The good man being desirous to avoid, as Congreve says, "that eternal rotation of tongue which never gave even an echo fair play," was induced to comply with her desire, and taking her with him to his solicitor, bequeathed to her his whole fortune. The lady, in consequence, was for a short period in good humour and full of spirits; but, alas! through the instability of human affairs, she at length assumed an increased tone of violence and independence; and in the climax of one of her curtain lectures, observed to her husband, that as she was now provided for, he might die as soon as he pleased. This expression, making a powerful impression on the mind of Mr. S——, he, as soon as breakfast was ended the following morning, repaired to his attorney's, whom he informed, that he had come for the purpose of making his will. "What!" said the lawyer, greatly surprised, "have you forgotten that you made your will six months

ago?"—"That was my wife's will," replied the client, "and now I am come to make my own." He then cancelled the former testament, and by a new one divided the bulk of his property (nine hundred a year) among his relations, and to his kind rib, he assigned an annuity of two hundred pounds.

The Lent performances opened at Covent Garden Theatre, on the 22d of the same month, with the sacred oratorio, 'The Messiah.' Mara that night sang the introductory recitative and air, for the first time, with great pathos; and in 'I know that my Redeemer liveth' she evinced the utmost delicacy and expression. At the end of the second act Dussek performed a concerto on the pianoforte, which was universally applauded. Dussek, who delighted the public with sweet sounds, gratified himself with delicious viands. He was an epitome of the fabled Erisichthon, who, according to Ovid, devoured at one meal provisions sufficient for a whole city. I went in the summer of last year with three friends (two of whom were ladies) to dine at the Ship Tavern, Greenwich, and we sat in the long room which commands a view of the Thames. While we were at dinner, near one of the windows, a waiter came and laid a cloth for one person on the next table, and when

we had dined and were taking our wine and fruit, he placed the dishes on it, which consisted of a dish of boiled eels, one of fried flounders, a boiled fowl, a dish of veal cutlets, and a couple of tarts. I had scarcely said "that's pretty well for one person," when in came Dussek, who, after a how d'ye do? sat down to it. He was indeed some time at his repast; but if he was slow he was sure, for in half an hour he had cleared all the dishes, leaving, with the exception of the bones, "not a wreck behind!"

At Drury Lane Theatre the new grand dramatic romance of 'Blue Beard, or Female curiosity,' was performed for the first time on the 16th of January. This piece was written by Mr. Colman, jun., and its music was composed and compiled by Mr. Kelly. The principal singers in it were Messrs. Kelly, Suett, Bannister, jun., Mrs. Bland, Miss Decamp, (afterwards Mrs. Charles Kemble,) and Mrs. Crouch. Among the best things were a ballad, delightfully sung by Mrs. Crouch, 'When pensive I thought on my love,' the quartet in the first act, and the little march in the procession. By the by, there was a contest as to who gave birth to this popular little march, something similar to that relating to the birth of Homer; for though seven cities did not contend for

the honour, seven musicians did. The music of 'Blue Beard' deserves great commendation. The success of this piece was unprecedented.

There was a grand concert of vocal and instrumental music from the works of Handel, at the opera concert rooms, by command, and under the patronage of their Majesties, on Friday the 4th of May, for the benefit of the fund of the Royal Society of Musicians, under the direction of the Duke of Leeds, the Earls of Chesterfield and Uxbridge, Lords Fitzwilliam, Malden, and Grey de Wilton. The singers were Madame Mara, Madame Banti, Messrs. Harrison, Bartleman, Knyvett, and others: Cramer led.

During a late friendly music party at the house of Sir J. D—, the conversation between the performances turning on that ferocious animal, the tiger, a gentleman asserted that there never was an instance of one being tamed, and related the following anecdote in support of his assertion: A gentleman, who had returned from India, brought with him a young tiger of so docile a nature, as to be suffered to roam about his study of a morning whilst he was reading or writing. One day in the winter, while he was sitting in a cabriole chair near the fire-place, reflecting on a passage he had been reading, with a book in his right hand, and his left hanging over the arm of

the chair, the animal approached and licked it. This at first he thought nothing of, till, it having been repeated several times, he felt a soreness on it; and looking at the beast, he perceived that he had, from the roughness of his tongue, drawn blood, which having tasted for the first time, his infuriated eyes and eager countenance left not a doubt on his mind that had he withdrawn his hand the tiger would have sprung upon him and have destroyed him. Thus circumstanced, he fortunately had sufficient presence of mind to keep his hand in the same position, whilst with the other he reached one of his pistols from off the mantel-piece, and preserved his own life by shooting the tiger through the head. Notwithstanding the tendency this relation may have to induce a belief that the tiger is not susceptible of being tamed, I place too implicit a reliance on the truth of an occurrence which I am about to relate, not to feel convinced that such an opinion would be founded in error. The old Lord Tyrawley had a tiger so tame that he was permitted frequently to go about the house like a dog, affording amusement to some and terror to others. My elder brother, Mr. J. Parke, (the brilliant oboe player of his day,) when a young man, was a *protégé* of his lordship, and about the year 1768 first attended his concerts. On one of these occasions

he was shown into a large waiting room till the preparations were completed, and while standing by the fire-place, he was astonished and terrified at beholding a large tiger issue from behind a lofty screen placed before the door. The animal with majestic deportment walked quietly round the room, (occasionally observing him,) whilst he, "almost distilled to jelly with his fears," was relieved from his agitation by the party, who had sent the beast in, following, almost bursting with laughter at the trick they had played. This tiger continued perfectly docile until he died, which was several years afterwards. Lord Tyrawley lived before my time, but I had the pleasure of knowing his son, General O'Hara, of the guards, who had been governor of the English settlements at Senegal in Africa. When the general returned to England, he brought home some African curiosities, among which was the head of that extraordinary animal the hippopotamus. But what most claimed attention was a young negro, who, having afterwards been educated in England, became an excellent English and French scholar! This man had been a constant attendant on the general in all the engagements he had been in during the American war; never, even in the hottest of them, having been absent from his side. The general, in the year 1780, requested I would

teach this person the oboe, which he had expressed a strong desire to learn. For this purpose he attended me in the house of my elder brother, to whom I had been articled, and he proved that, had he been enabled to prosecute the cultivation of that instrument, he would have become a good musician. It happened, however, unluckily for him, that when he came the sixth time he was the bearer of a letter (inclosing twenty pounds), which announced that the general, having been appointed to a command on foreign service, was obliged to leave England immediately. General O'Hara had the command of the British troops, during the war against the French republic, in the attack on Toulon, which he survived but a few years; and at his death he bequeathed to his friend of colour, in consideration of his faithful services, an annuity of three hundred pounds. This black man's ability, and his attachment to his patron and benefactor, prove that an African with a cultivated mind differs from an European in nothing but his colour, which is not the effect of *sin*, but *sun*.

Vauxhall Gardens opened for the season on the 24th of May with a grand gala. In the concert, Hook's pleasing songs, and the oboe concerto by the elder Parke, were the prominent features.

A new grand ballet of action was performed for

the first time at Covent Garden Theatre on the 20th of October, called 'Oscar and Malvina, or The Hall of Fingal.' This piece, taken from Ossian, which was pre-eminently successful, was the production of Mr. Byrn, author of 'Captain Cooke.' It was got up with great splendour, and had a long run. The Scottish music, selected and harmonised by Mr. Shield, was a rich and gratifying treat. In the quick movement of the overture, which was composed by Mr. Reeve, a Mr. Courtney played a solo on the union-pipes, with a better tone and effect than I have ever before heard. He was loudly applauded and encored. At the same theatre a new comic opera in three acts, called 'Ramah Droogh, or Wine does wonders,' was produced on the 12th of November. It was written by Mr. Cobb. The music of this very successful piece was composed by Messrs. Mazzinghi and Reeve. Mazzinghi had been retained to compose the opera solely; but being diffident of his comic powers, Mr. Reeve was called in to his assistance. This system of having a plurality of composers was afterwards extended so far, that I have known instances in which there has been one to almost every song in the piece. Nay, I have known composers who could only write the melodies of the songs, which they got others to harmonise. This was not the case while

Mr. Shield was composer at Covent Garden Theatre. He wrote in different styles with equal effect, and certainly none of his contemporaries were so happy in giving accompaniments to the beautiful but wild melodies of Ireland. A curious proof of his ability in that line occurred when O'Keefe produced his comic opera called 'The Lad of the Hills, or The Wicklow Gold Mines;' in which, at the request of Mr. Shield, I composed the finale to the second act. The songs of this he wrote to old Irish airs. These Shield had to harmonise and give accompaniments to, which, from the irregularity of the melodies, was a difficult task, further enhanced by the shortness of the time generally allowed for its accomplishment. At that time Shield played at the opera, and having one evening two or three of them in his pocket, he jocosely asked Stamitz, the celebrated German composer, what sort of bass he would put to them? Stamitz, having looked at them attentively, replied,—"None;—they won't bear harmony."—"That's discouraging," said Shield, "for *I must* put some to them for a rehearsal at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning." This in fact he did, and the effect produced delighted all who heard them. During the last rehearsal of 'Ramah Droogh' Mr. Ware, the leader of the orchestra, and myself were on the stage joking with Munden and others, when

Johnstone (commonly called Irish Johnstone) not being very perfect in his part, was consequently out of humour, and objected to it rather rudely; on which I observed that it was unexpected from him, because he was generally the first to promote such irregularities. His reply and my rejoinder were not very temperate. Johnstone however walked off the stage, when having occasion at that moment to use my pocket handkerchief, Lewis ran up to me and exclaimed—"I see you was determined to have the last blow!"

The King's Theatre opened for the season on Saturday the 1st of December, with a new serious opera, intitled 'Medonto.' The music by Sarti. Banti, Viganoni, and Benelli sang admirably, and were honoured with the repeated plaudits of the audience. The music of Sarti is occasionally tender, energetic, and sublime. He has displayed exquisite softness, with the rapidity of empassioned feeling.

1799.

The new year's Ode, performed in the presence of their Majesties at St. James's, was composed by Sir William Parsons, Knight, master of the King's band.

At the King's Theatre a new serious opera, called 'Ines di Castro,' was brought out on Tues-

day the 22d of January. The music of this opera was composed in Italy for Mrs. Billington by Bianchi. Amongst the most pleasing pieces may be ranked Banti's first air, which she sang admirably; the duet between Viganoni and Benelli; and the whole of the finale to the first act. The overture, though pleasing, affords no characteristic traits. The Italian composers of that day considered the overture to an opera of so little consequence, that they generally left it till the last moment, and I have frequently known that scarcely time has been allowed for the copyist to get it ready for the last rehearsal. The comic opera this year afforded little satisfaction, owing to there being no efficient first comic female performer. The proprietor therefore called in the aid of Mrs. Bland, of Drury Lane Theatre, who, though an Italian born, and an excellent singer in her own proper sphere, did not afford that gratification which the subscribers required. Under these circumstances Madame Allegranti, the rage of former days, made her appearance on the 3d of April, in the comic opera 'Il Matrimonio Segreto.' Allegranti, whose singing was idolised twenty years before, had not sufficient perfections left to sustain the important part which she then attempted; and the comic opera proceeded as well as it could without her to the end of the season.

Having played many years at St. James's in the odes performed on the birth-days of the King, for Lord somebody's butler, who had been appointed one of his Majesty's band, I began to think that I was, from long services, entitled to become one of that establishment when a vacancy occurred. But, aware that merit was nothing, and influence every thing, I began to look around me for a patron sufficiently powerful to recommend me to the Lord Chamberlain, in whose gift those places are. While I was considering the matter, Mr. Symes, a young gentleman of large fortune, a member of the Leicestershire hunt, and a kind friend and pupil of mine, called on me; and the subject being brought on the tapis, I asked him if he was acquainted with Mr. M—l, as I had been informed by Sir William Parsons that a recommendation from that gentleman might be successful. My friend replied that he knew Mr. M—l well, and that he would speak to him in my favour. Mr. M—l was father of the hunt at Melton Mowbray. In his early career he lost a leg whilst following the hounds, and afterwards his life! A vacancy occurring some time after, the Lord Chamberlain called on Sir William Parsons, master of the King's band, and laid before him three names, among which was mine, saying, —"These three persons are equally recommended

to me; therefore select the one you think most fit." This Sir William wished to decline; on which his lordship observed, "If you don't point out one, I shall fill up the vacancy with one of my own people," meaning one of his servants. To prevent this the master of the band said—"These three men have equal ability, therefore I will name Okell, whose father (a horse-dealer) when I was a boy at Westminster school, used occasionally to lend me a horse to ride gratis."

Whether early friendship should supersede duty, the following circumstance will enable the reader to determine. At the rehearsal of the next new year's ode Mr. Okell, the newly appointed musician in ordinary to his Majesty, having, by a course of excessive drinking, been reduced to almost the lowest degree of nervous debility, could not sustain a note of the part he had to play on his instrument, the French-horn; and being therefore totally inefficient, he was withdrawn from the duties of his situation, and allowed to send a deputy through life!

That Sir William Parsons asserted an untruth (putting me out of the question) when he said, "these men have all equal ability," is undoubted; for the other candidate, Mr. J. Parkinson, was generally acknowledged to be one of the first bassoon players in Europe; whereas the person

preferred never had any musical reputation whatever. Conceiving therefore that the conduct of Sir William Parsons had been strongly at variance with the repeated professions of friendship I had received from him, I resigned the office I had so many years held as a deputy, and never after assisted in those performances.

The celebrated Beau Nash, formerly a leading personage at Bath, amongst other frolics (as is well known), caused the turn-spit dogs of several of his friends to be enticed away one Sunday morning, whereby, on their return from church, instead of sitting down to a good dinner, they experienced the mortification of fasting till the curs were liberated. If at the period I allude to, some wag, in following the example, had inveigled away the musicians who performed as deputies for the butlers, valets, &c. at the birth-day odes at St. James's, what would have been the consequence?—Why this;—the King, the great and beneficent patron of the art, whose memory will be revered by British professors of music to the end of time, would then have learnt how his royal band had been constituted, and would in future have caused talent to supersede interest. Happy has it been for the artists of England, that during the last and present reigns, they have in George the Third, and George the Fourth, been blessed

with monarchs whose fostering patronage has nurtured and matured genius to its present high state of excellence.

Mr. Symes, the friend who had interested himself in my behalf, possessed a fine fortune; his father, at his death, having bequeathed him one hundred thousand pounds in money, together with his large estates in the West Indies. It was so ordered, however, that he should not be of age till he had attained the age of twenty-five years. Before that period arrived, being desirous of uniting himself to an accomplished young lady to whom he was warmly attached, he gave his guardians the slip, and proceeded as fast as if the god of love had been his postilion, to Gretna Green, where he was united to the object of his affections.

A very extraordinary feat of horsemanship occurred on that occasion. M. Symes and his intended bride (accompanied by a female friend) travelled with a post-chaise and four, whilst the brother of the bride, Captain R—s, R. N. (also a particular friend of mine), who was also of the party, kept pace with them, on horseback, throughout that long journey! Mr. Symes did not live many years to enjoy his fortune, for having gone to the West Indies with his wife to take possession of his estates, the climate disagreed

with him, and during the operation of an emetic, he ruptured a blood vessel, and died within two hours afterwards, having scarcely time to

Cast one longing, lingering look behind.

Dibdin opened his new theatre in Leicester Place to a numerous audience. The concert of ancient music commenced at the Opera Rooms on Wednesday the 13th of February. Their Majesties, four Princesses, and Prince Edward, were present. Banti sang ‘ Verdi prati,’ and ‘ Ombra Larvi,’ in the highest perfection; and Harrison sang ‘ Cara sposa,’ with Linley's admirable violoncello accompaniment, in an elegant and impressive manner. Cramer led the band, and Greatorex presided at the organ. The vocal concert began at Willis's Rooms on the 26th of February. The opera concert, and Salomon's, being extinct, Cramer attempted to resume the professional concert for six nights, at Willis's Rooms, aided by the talents of Banti, Benelli, Viganoni, and the principal part of the opera band. The first concert took place on the 15th of March; but notwithstanding the great combination of talent displayed, these concerts merely lingered through the six nights, and were not afterwards renewed.

The oratorios at Covent Garden Theatre com-

menced on the 18th of February, with the sacred oratorio, 'The Messiah.' Mara, by her style of singing, proved that she had no equal in Handel's music. Miss Pool sang 'Rejoice,' with correctness and brilliancy: it was encored, as well as the hallelujah chorus, enthusiastically. At the end of the first act I played a concerto on the oboe, and Jarnovicki performed a concerto on the violin at the end of the second act. In the week following this performance I went to dine with Mr. Dowse, an old friend, residing at North End, Hampstead, where I met Jarnovicki, Mr. Shield, and several other musical friends. The day proving agreeable, it was late before we thought of returning home, when a servant was despatched to town for two hackney coaches; but he being unable to procure more than one, and there being no alternative, we departed with seven persons in it. When we arrived at Tottenhan Court Road, there being several coaches on the stand, one was called for Jarnovicki to convey him home; but on its coming up, although he had been in London several years, he could not muster up English enough to name the street in which he lived, and none of the party knowing his residence, it produced a dilemma, in which he participated, till suddenly recollecting himself, he broke out, sing-

ing- ‘ Malbrouk s'en va-t-en guerre,’ which enabled his English friends to direct the coachman to Marlborough Street.

The long and anxiously expected play, with music, called ‘ Pizzaro,’ was produced at Drury Lane Theatre on the 24th of May. The music of the airs, &c., incidental to the piece, was composed and compiled by Mr. Kelly. The overture, and the symphonies between the acts, which were appropriate and excellent, were by Dussek. In the quintet, ‘ Fly away time,’ and the choruses and marches, great merit was displayed.

At the time I was first engaged as principal oboist to Covent Garden Theatre, in the year 1783, I occasionally dined and supped at a chop-house, in Duke's Court, Bow Street, Covent Garden, called Jupp's, which was much frequented by theatrical performers. One night, whilst supping there with a friend, a gentleman came into the next box, whom by his dialect we soon discovered to be a son of Israel. When seated, he rang the bell for the waiter, who forthwith attending, he desired to have half a dozen *porcht-akes*. The waiter replied, “ yes, sir,” and departed to order them to be got ready. The waiter shortly afterwards returning with a dish containing six pork steaks, the Jew, viewing with surprise the forbidden fruit, exclaimed with great warmth, “ Dat

is not vat I vant; I ordered half a dozen *porcht-akes.*"—"Well, sir," said the waiter, "here are six, and they are as prime pork steaks as were ever cut from pig."—"Baugh! baugh!" cried the Jew, "I want no pig's meat: if I did, I should ask for the mutton with the *tick rind,* as all our peoples do when dey eat de pork. No, I want de *porcht-akes,* vat de hens do lay."—"O, sir," said the waiter, (who at length comprehended his meaning,) I beg your pardon, I mistook the thing entirely; you shall have the *poached eggs* in a few minutes." The waiter kept his word, and the Jew (who appeared to enjoy his repast), having cleared the dish, ordered six more, and so on, seriatim, until he had actually eaten fifty-two!

A grand selection from the works of Handel, for the benefit of the fund of the Royal Society of Musicians was performed at the Opera Rooms, on the 29th of May, by command of their Majesties. The Earl of Uxbridge was honorary president. The singers were Madame Banti, Mrs. Harrison, Signor Viganoni, Mr. Harrison, and Mr. Bartleman. The performance went off in the first style of excellence, and the room was filled with persons of the first rank and fashion.

Vauxhall Gardens opened for the season on the 24th of May; and on the 12th of August, the birthday of the Prince of Wales, a gala was given,

which had never been equalled at that fashionable place of entertainment. On that occasion the gardens were illuminated by twenty thousand lamps of various colors, formed into devices; and in the saloon and several parts of the gardens, finely executed transparencies were exhibited. In the well-selected concert, the vocal and instrumental performers exerted themselves with the happiest effect; and the display of fireworks was both novel and splendid. The company on that night amounted to twelve thousand persons; and the supping was so general, that amongst the refreshments consumed were one hundred dozen of chickens, and a hundred and forty dozen bottles of port wine! The evening, notwithstanding, was passed with the greatest hilarity and harmony, and the company did not separate till a late hour, or rather an early one the next morning. Among the company were many of the first rank, whose carriages in waiting filled both sides of the road to the extent of a mile.

The winter theatres opened as usual in September. They neither of them produced any musical novelty worth recording.

Cramer, the celebrated violin player, who had for many years been admired for his superior talent and the suavity of his manners, died on the 5th of October. He had been perhaps much af-

fected by the foul play by which two years before he was removed from the opera. This, together with other misfortunes, undermined his health, which progressively declined till death overtook him. Cramer, before he came to England, was retained by the Duke of Wirtemburg at Stutgard, who permitted him to travel for two years, allowing him his salary during that period. On his way to England he stayed a short time in Paris, and was invited to play a concerto on the violin at the *concert-spirituel.* When he entered the orchestra on the night he was going to perform, he was not a little surprised at hearing the ripieno violin players flourishing the most difficult passages up to the top of the finger-board. The reflection which arose in his mind was, " if the French subordinate fiddle players possess such uncommon powers of execution, I can have little chance of pleasing a Parisian audience." He however summoned all his courage, and proceeded. Contrary to his expectation, he received general and vehement applause. Cramer, dining the following day with an eminent French musician, related the circumstance, when his friend observed, " O, rot them, they only practice such monkey tricks, and can play nothing else." Cramer, during his two years' absence from his patron, experienced such extraordinary success in England,

that he forgot to return to Stutgard. This was afterwards a source of pain to him, at least in a single instance, for at one of the Sunday concerts held at the Duke of Queensberry's (in which I was engaged), he was greatly chagrined on beholding the Duke and Duchess of Wirtemburg, who had just arrived in England, seated exactly before him. Cramer, whose nerves were considerably deranged by this rencontre, when he had done leading the concert, took the lead out of the room with the utmost celerity.

1800.

This year the Italian opera, which gave the tone to other musical undertakings, had a strong company, at the head of which were, Banti, Viganoni, Benelli, and Morelli; and on the 31st of January an excellent addition was made by the successful appearance of Madame Bolla, in Paesiello's charming opera, 'I Zingari in Fiera.' Madame Bolla, who was an excellent actress as well as singer, possessed a voice which combined strength and sweetness; and in her airs she displayed both grace and animation. The serious opera was no less complete, for (after an absence of four years) it was joined by Roselli; and a new and beautiful opera of Sarti's, called 'Alessandro e Timeto,' was given on the 15th of April, em-

bellished by the exquisite tones of Banti, the melodious notes of Benelli, and the delicate softness of Roselli's inflections. Giuseppe Sarti was appointed, in the year 1756, *maestro di capella* to the young King of Denmark at Copenhagen. He afterwards went to Venice, where he was made master of the *conservatorio de la pieta*, and composed his opera ' Giulio Sabino,' by which he obtained great reputation. He was afterwards invited to St. Petersburg, where the Empress Catherine appointed him director of the conservatory of music at Ekaterinoslav, with a munificent salary, to which she subsequently added a title of nobility and an estate. Sarti composed many operas, and some pieces for the church. It has been stated by some hypercritics that he attended too much to melody, and that he frequently transgressed the established rules of harmony. If the latter accusation is true, Sarti must have done so by choice, for the sake of effect, as several ingenious composers have done. He was, however, an elegant writer, and had been long and justly celebrated. He was a native of Faenza in Italy, and died in the year 1797.

A new comic opera was also produced on the 14th of May, called, ' I due fratelli rivali,' the music of which was by Winter. This opera, from the excellence of its music, and the happy ex-

ertions of Madame Bolla, Viganoni, and Morelli, deserved the flattering reception it met with. Although the Italian Opera was much frequented, the performances of sacred music at Covent Garden Theatre, which commenced for the Lent season, on Friday the 28th of February, were not neglected. The first was a selection in which Mrs. Second's rich voice in 'Sweet bird,' was as mellifluous as the nightly warbler she invoked. The fine chorus the hallelujah was rapturously encored. The interval at the end of the second act was filled up by a concerto on the oboe by me. Haydn's oratorio of the 'Creation' was performed for the first time in England on the 28th of March. It was received with great applause, particularly the first act of it, in which the sublime chorus, 'The Heavens are telling,' excited the admiration of the whole audience.

The concerts this year were not so numerous perhaps as in former seasons; but, in addition to the two already established, viz. the concert of ancient music, and the vocal concert, twelve were given by subscription at Willis's Rooms, under the patronage of the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cumberland. Mr. Raimondi, who led the band, was also director. The singers were Madame Mara, Madame Dussek, (wife to the piano-

forte player,) and, for the first time, Signor Damiani, whose voice was powerful and melodious.

Our two national theatres, where music had been for some years rapidly advancing, were not inactive. At Drury Lane Theatre a new opera in three acts, by Mr. Franklin, called 'The Egyptian Festival,' was produced on the 11th of March. In this opera Madame Mara, who was engaged for twelve nights, displayed her refined powers to the greatest advantage. The music, composed by Florio, is generally good. At Covent Garden Theatre, the most musical of the two houses, an operatic piece in two acts, intitled 'Paul and Virginia,' was brought out on the 1st of May. It was written by Mr. Cobb, and its music was composed by Mazzinghi and Reeve. In this piece Incledon had two songs, which he sang admirably. The first, with an obligato accompaniment for the oboe, in which my part went up to G in alto, Incledon sang with great spirit; and in the second, the feeling and expression displayed elicited a general encore. The song by Townshend, 'Our country is our ship,' was hailed with enthusiasm.

It should be observed that personal peculiarities, of an acquired or physical nature, are now so common that they almost pass unnoticed.

The elderly noble lady, by a habit acquired in her youthful days, displays her's by a studied simper, calculated to show a set of teeth formerly as white as the ivory of Acheen; but which Time, with his usual want of gallantry, has at length unblanched; while her lord, through the indulgences in early life, exhibits his by a frequent and palsied-like nod of the head. The effect of the latter has been whimsically illustrated by a wag, who describes him as going for a morning lounge to Christy's during a sale of pictures (not intending to buy), where, on the auctioneer's looking round at the bidders, and observing him several times to favour him with a nod, this mandarin at the end of the sale found, to his great surprise, that one half of the lots which had been put up had been knocked down to him!

Many years ago I met at a party a gentleman of very pleasing manners, who possessed one of these peculiarities, consisting of an involuntary winking of his left eye. On that occasion one of the company, a person of reserved disposition, strongly tinctured with jealousy, observing that this young man, whilst engaged in conversation with his wife, winked his eye several times, fidgeted and changed color; and on its being repeated, he became at length so extremely irritated, that, taking the friend in whose house they

were visiting aside, he demanded to know the name and address of the unconscious offender, as he should certainly send him a message the following morning. "A message!" cried his friend, "for what? What has he done to call for such violence?"—"Why, sir," said the man of the yellow stockings, "he has several times this evening, whilst conversing with my wife, had the audacity to wink his eye at her, which is an insult really not to be borne."—"What!" said his friend, "would you punish a fancied offence by removing from the world, perhaps, an amiable and meritorious young man, and afterwards have the misery to learn that he winks his eye at the wife of every man, owing to a physical defect which occasions convulsive motions of that organ?" This explanation subdued the jealous man's anger; and the young gentleman, during the remainder of the evening, winked at the wife with impunity, whilst the husband winked at the misconceived freedom.

Vauxhall Gardens, which possessed one of the finest bands in Europe, opened for the season on the 4th of June, with a grand gala in honour of his Majesty's birth-day. In the concert the oboe concerto of the elder Parke was tasteful and brilliant.

In July I went to Cheltenham, where I assisted

in the morning concerts given by Mr. Ashe, the proprietor of the Bath concerts, under the patronage of the Earl of Uxbridge and other persons of distinction. The singers were Viganoni, Morelli, and Mrs. Ashe, who sang some of her pleasing ballads with great effect. This elegant watering-place was full of fashionables, who were unwell, or fancied themselves so, together with a number of ruby-faced *bons-vivants*, who came there to dilute their wine with water. When the concerts were ended I was invited by Mr. Watson, the well-known proprietor of the theatre, to accompany Mrs. Martyr of Covent Garden Theatre (who with Kelly and Mrs. Crouch was performing there) in the song of 'Sweet echo,' on the oboe, which I did. This favourite song pleased so much, that it was repeated several evenings. It was also performed one night at the Cirencester Theatre by the particular desire of Earl Bathurst, whose seat is in that neighbourhood. On my first going behind the scenes at the Cheltenham Theatre Watson, who was a good-humoured and eccentric Irishman, introduced one of his actors to me in the following manner: "Mr. Parke, this is Mr. D—y: he is the best dressed man in my theatre, though he has one of the smallest salaries: but," added he, significantly, "his wife keeps the pit-door." The band of this theatre

was good: it was ably led by Mr. Gamble, and the rest of the performers were from the Bath Theatre. Watson had several theatres in his circuit, at one of which, Coventry, not only the manager reaped a plentiful harvest, but the performers also, their benefits having been well attended. To that city, therefore, Watson sent only such of his performers as in his opinion deserved a preference. The morning before I left Cheltenham I met Watson and Kelly in the High Street. During our conversation I asked Watson who Mr. M—n was, the new actor, who had played the part of 'Trudge,' in 'Inkle and Yarico,' the preceding evening. "Oh," replied Watson, in his whimsical manner, "he is one of my best actors."—"If that's the case," said Kelly, "bad is the best; but I suppose you got him for nothing."—"No," said Watson, "I give him our best salary, I assure you, a guinea per week!—But he don't go to Coventry."—"That's strange, indeed," said Kelly, "for if I was manager instead of you, I should make it a point to send him to Coventry."

From Cheltenham I proceeded to Worcester, a delightful ride of twenty-five miles along the banks of the river Severn; and during a short stay there I played (by particular desire) a concerto on the oboe in the theatre, to a crowded audience, it

being the race-week, and the city full of company. A new and unexpected fine effect was produced in this concerto, the last movement of which was our national air, 'Rule Britannia,' with variations, by the whole of the audience singing the chorus *fortissimo* every time it occurred. This spirit-stirring air was universally encored. Many of the residents of Worcester (persons of small fortune and great pride) affect to hold the people of Birmingham, twenty-five miles distant, in sovereign contempt, on account of their being manufacturers. An instance of this I witnessed. Passing one morning through the hall of the great hotel, the Hop-Pole, a gentleman of Worcester came in, and said, in a loud voice, to a waiter who was near me,—"Waiter! Is there any person in the coffee-room?"—"Yes, sir," replied the waiter, "there is one gentleman, a Birmingham gentleman."—"A Birmingham *gentleman!*" rejoined the Worcester man, "then I must have a look at him, for I never saw one in my life!" The Worcester people may be considered musical. There are many respectable resident professors of music in the city; and among the clergy and the laity are a number of amateurs who play on various instruments. They have regular concerts in the season; and every third year is held there the triennial meeting of

the three choirs of Worcester, Gloucester, and Hereford.

When my engagement at Worcester ended, I accompanied Mr. Richards, the proprietor of Birmingham Vauxhall, in a post-chaise to perform a few nights there. I was, as before, received with general approbation in my oboe concertos; and in private life I found no relaxation in those polite attentions which I had formerly experienced. During my stay I was invited to visit their dilettanti concert, where, when the music was ended, we sat down to a handsome supper, and passed an hour or two afterwards with a great deal of rational pleasantry. It was on this occasion I observed that the people of Birmingham retaliated on those of Worcester for their illiberal sarcasms, by the relation of the following anecdote: "While the Earl of Sandwich was at the head of the Admiralty, being on a visit to a noble friend near Worcester, the mayor and corporation of that city invited him to meet the county members, &c., at the Town Hall at dinner; which invitation his lordship accepted. As soon as Lord Sandwich had arrived the mayor ordered the dinner to be placed on the table; in doing which, one of the cooks, on entering the door of the hall, (which had a rising step,) stumbled, and let the contents of his dish, a fine neat's tongue, fall on the floor.

The mayor was greatly disturbed by this accident, and Lord Sandwich said to him, with much good-humour, "Oh, never mind, Mr. Mayor, its only a *lapsus linguæ*." This *jeu d'esprit* created a general laugh amongst the *gentlemen* present, in which the mayor awkwardly joined. At a subsequent corporation dinner, the Mayor, who had been struck with the success of Lord Sandwich's wit, (though he did not perfectly understand it,) was determined to show off; and having instructed a fellow of his own, he stumbled on coming into the room, and let fall a fine roasted leg of mutton. This creating great displeasure amongst the aldermen, the mayor loudly exclaimed, "Oh, pray forgive him, gentlemen, its only a *lapsus linguæ*."

No musical novelty was produced at the winter theatres till the 15th of November, when a new operatic piece, in two acts, called 'Il Bondicani,' was performed, for the first time, at Covent Garden Theatre. The music of this piece was the joint production of Mr. Atwood and Mr. Moorhead. It was appropriate and pleasing throughout.

1801.

The singers at the King's Theatre this year were the same as in the preceding, till the 5th of May, when Madame Vinci made her first appearance in this country in Andreozzi's fine comic

opera ' La Principessa Filiosa.' Madame Vinci displayed a pleasing figure, an agreeable countenance, and a sweet and powerful voice. She had the skill of expressing a perfect crescendo and diminuendo in her singing, which was new and highly effective. She was eminently successful. Banti, Viganoni, Morelli, and Madame Bolla, performed during the season with great ability and with general success.

The oratorios commenced at Covent Garden Theatre, on Friday the 20th of February, with Mozart's ' Requiem' and Handel's ' L'Allegro ed il Pensieroso.' Mozart's ' Requiem' is a composition of infinite science and dullness, from the effects of which the audience was happily relieved by Incledon's song in ' L'Allegro,' ' Haste thee Nymph,' which he gave with such inimitable and contagious an effect, that his jocund laugh seized a considerable portion of the audience, who heartily joined in it. During this performance, Mr. Field (pupil of Clementi) played a concerto on the piano-forte, which was more remarkable for rapidity than expression. Oratorios were also given at the Theatre-Royal, Haymarket, by Madame Mara and Dr. Arnold. Mr. Salomon led the band. They commenced with a selection. " Madame Mara, in Handel's divine songs," says a critic, " never approached nearer to perfection

or was honoured with greater applause, and the oboe concerto by Mr. W. T. Parke, (in which were introduced variations on 'Rule Britannia,') was brilliant and effective." Haydn's oratorio 'The Creation' was performed with general success the second night, and on the third night an entirely new oratorio called 'The woman of Shunan' was given. The music was composed by Dr. Arnold. This oratorio in its airs and chorusses displayed many beauties, and though the works of that immortal composer, Handel, had taken such strong possession of our affections, this fine production is justly entitled to our unqualified praise and admiration.

In the course of this Lent season, Madame Mara, for the first time, sang the well known and admired air 'Consider fond Shepherd,' in Handel's 'Acis and Galatea,' in which I had to respond to the different passages of the voice on the oboe. As it is not, perhaps, generally known, it may be observed, that the singer has the advantage of studying the embellishments she intends to introduce, while the instrumental performer, who had nothing but what is written by the composer before him, must, if his talent will carry him so far, follow the singer spontaneously through all the mazes of a luxuriant fancy. On the occasion alluded to, Mara was uncommonly florid and tasteful, and it was remarked by Dr.

Arnold and all present, that in the responses I followed her through all her flights of genius to a note. The song was vehemently encored; and in the repetition of it, although Mara again drew largely on her prolific imagination, it was given with such effect as produced a burst of applause rarely witnessed. After the performances of the evening were ended, Madame Mara said, good humouredly, to Dr. Arnold in the green-room, "I think that, in the song 'Consider fond shepherd,' if I could have made a flight to Germany, Mr. Parke would have followed me."—"Yes, madam," replied Dr. Arnold, "and if you had made a flight to the infernal regions, no doubt he would have followed you there, to make the Apollo-like attempt of conducting you, like another Eurydice, back again to delight the public."

The vocal concert this season, for the first time, blended instrumental with the vocal music, at Willis's Rooms.

Our national winter theatres produced no musical novelty this season, until the 28th of February, when a new pantomimic drama was first performed under the title of 'La Perouse, or the desolate Isle,' taken from Kotzebue's drama of 'La Perouse.' The music of this piece, by Davy and Moorhead, is scientific and tasteful, and con-

tains a considerable share of original melody. 'La Perouse' had a long run, and became very popular.

The gala at the opening of Vauxhall Gardens, on the 4th of June, in honour of his Majesty's birth-day, was splendid in the extreme. In the admirably performed concert, Mr. Hook, in his organ concerto, played 'God save the King,' with great ability.

In the summer of the year 1801, Mr. P., a very intimate friend of mine, holding a distinguished and lucrative legal situation, went with his wife, during that season of inactivity for sheriffs' officers called the long vacation, to pass two or three weeks at Brighton. Having returned one day from a morning ride, he was greatly surprised and pleased at finding a card had been left, under cover, inviting him and his rib to a party that evening at the pavillion. He at first considered it an extraordinary circumstance, never having been honoured with the notice of the Prince; but being at length influenced by vanity and the importunities of a silly woman, he determined to avail himself of the honour which awaited him, conceiving at the same time (as he afterwards informed me), that an invitation from the august personage was a command. He accordingly proceeded with his better half to the pavillion, and presenting the

card, which was properly signed, &c. they were ushered into the presence of his Royal Highness and some ladies and gentlemen, who had previously arrived. The intruders being quite unknown, produced a dilemma of an awkward nature to all parties, till the Prince, with his usual politeness and affability, making inquiries of Mr. P., was satisfied that a hoax had been practised on him. On the parties being about to withdraw, his Royal Highness said to them, with great delicacy and feeling, "As you have been thus imposed on, it is my advice that you remain here a short time, whereby you will defeat the malice of your enemy." It was never exactly ascertained who had played this daring trick; but it was perhaps with justice attributed to an Irish singing actor (acquainted with the parties abused), who, having access to some of the departments of the pavilion, had surreptitiously obtained a blank card, on which he had inserted the names. This was in some measure confirmed by that impudent son of Erin leaving Brighton early the following morning.

Mrs. Billington, that truly great singer, who had passed the last six years in Italy, having returned to England, the proprietors of both our English theatres proposed terms to her for an engagement; when the lady, after a short hesita-

tion, gave the preference to her first employer, Mr. Harris of Covent Garden Theatre, on the following terms: three thousand guineas to perform during the ensuing season, three times a week, a free benefit insured at five hundred pounds, and five hundred pounds more to her brother, Mr. Weichsell, for leading the band on the nights she performed. This engagement was broken by Mr. Sheridan, the proprietor of Drury Lane Theatre, making it appear that he had first offered those terms; so that it was at length agreed that she should perform alternately at both houses. This point being adjusted, Mrs. Billington made her first appearance, after a lapse of seven years, at Covent Garden Theatre on the 3rd of October, in the character of Mandane, in Arne's fine opera of 'Artaxerxes.' Mrs. Billington's voice appeared to have acquired additional strength under the clear sky of Italy, and she had most happily engrafted the Italian on the English style of singing. She sang the recitatives and the whole of the airs inimitably, but was most impressive in 'Let not rage,' and 'The soldier tired,' which was tumultuously encored. In the latter, the second time of singing it, she introduced an elegant and playful alteration in some of the divisions, which was ingenious, new, and fascinating. She hurried, however, some parts of

this famous song, in order to render the divisions more brilliant, whereby in some measure she sacrificed its characteristic dignity. In the third act she introduced, with extraordinary effect, a bravura, accompanied by Mr. Weichsell on the violin, in the performance of which he displayed a rich tone, a finished shake, and brilliant execution. Mrs. Billington performed the same character with like success at Drury Lane Theatre on the 8th of October. On both occasions the applause was immense, and the houses excessively crowded. Mr. Braham and Signora Storace, who had been engaged by Mr. Harris while they were on the continent, having arrived in England, made their first appearance at Covent Garden Theatre on the 9th of December, in a new comic opera, by Prince Hoare, called 'Chains of the heart, or the slave by choice.' The music was composed by Mazzinghi and Reeve. Braham showed astonishingly improved powers. But the new style which he had adopted during his absence from England was not generally relished here, owing to the profusion of embellishment he threw into even his most simple airs. The most fastidious, however, a short time afterwards listened to him with pleasure. That Braham's new style was not generally admired, is not surprising; for in music as in dress, a new fashion

frequently appears *outré*, till use has reconciled us to it. Storace's acting and singing powers were as brilliant as ever. The music of this production was pleasing and original.

The King's Theatre opened on the 22nd of December, with Salieri's comic opera, called 'L' Angiolina;' the music of which is a happy combination of science, taste, and melody. It was universally applauded throughout. Salieri was born in the Venetian states, and educated under Pescetti, and subsequently Gasman. He composed operas in the Italian, German, and French languages. He however chiefly distinguished himself at Vienna, where he had been appointed chapel-master to the Emperor of Germany, and set thirteen operas, most of which were comic. In 1784 he composed 'Les Danaïdes,' a serious opera, for the Academie Royal de Musique at Paris, which was received with great applause, even in competition with the operas of Gluck, Piccini, and Sacchini.

1802.

Banti, who had maintained the situation of first *seria donna* at the King's Theatre for the last eight years, and was, at the end of the present season, going to retire to Italy, appeared on the 12th of January, in Nasolini's serious opera,

' La morte di Mitridate,' in which she exerted all her great powers with extraordinary effect. No particular novelty occurred at the King's Theatre till Banti's benefit, which took place on the 23rd of March, when Mrs. Billington appeared for the first time in that theatre, and for that night only, in a new serious opera, intitled ' Merope e Polifante.' The music by Nasolini. On this occasion the public curiosity was strongly excited, and the union of such extraordinary talents filled the house to excess. The fine music of Nasolini afforded both these great singers ample scope for the display of their commanding power.

Mrs. Billington, in pursuance of her engagement with Mr. Harris, appeared at the oratorios at Covent Garden Theatre on the 8th of March. She sang the contrasted songs of ' Pious orgies,' and ' Let the bright Seraphim,' inimitably, and in the latter she was encored. Mr. Weichsell led the band. When these oratorios were about to commence, Mr. Harris, not feeling inclined to let Mrs. Billington sing at those that were to be given at Drury Lane Theatre, Mr. Sheridan, proprietor of it, and member of parliament for Stafford, accompanied by Mr. Taylor, proprietor of the Opera House, and member for Leominster, called at Covent Garden Theatre to remonstrate with him; but Mr. Harris keeping out of the way,

Brandon, the then well-known box-book and house-keeper, was alone to be found. This man, who possessed more zeal for his employer than reasoning faculty, had the temerity to enter the lists with that giant of wit and eloquence, Sheridan, and actually made a long speech to him on the subject at issue. Sheridan paid great attention till he had finished his harangue, when, patting him on the shoulder, he cried, "Bravo, Brandon, bravo! As Drury Lane and the Opera House are represented, so should Covent Garden, and you ought to be its representative!"

Mrs. Billington was now become so fashionable, that she was engaged both at the concert of ancient music and at the vocal concert. At the latter she sang Purcell's 'Mad Bess' with great tact, and Sacchini's bravura, 'Se non avete,' in very brilliant style. Among the instrumental pieces, was performed (by permission of Mr. W. T. Parke, the proprietor of it,) Pleyel's celebrated manuscript concertante, composed expressly for the late professional concert, in the year 1792, for violin, bassoon, tenor, flute, violoncello, and oboe, by Messrs. F. Cramer, (leader,) Holmes, Shield, Saust, Linley, and myself. This piece was finely executed and universally applauded. Some time afterwards I published this concertante, under the patronage of his Royal Highness the Prince of

Wales. I had an extensive subscription, including several of the royal family; but the expense attending the publication was so great, that I derived no other advantage from it than the pleasure of having presented to the public the work of a great master, and the opportunity of giving the original score to my friend Mr. Shield, who had offered twenty guineas for it before it came into my possession. Madame Mara, who was engaged for the imperial opera at St. Petersburg, gave a farewell concert at the King's Theatre, on the 3rd of June, in which Mrs. Billington volunteered her assistance. Mara sang 'Pious orgies' in her own pure style, and Billington the bravura by Sacchini. They also sang a duet, composed for the occasion by Florio, in which the equally difficult and rapid passages were incomparably executed by both. At the end of the duet Mara took her leave, amidst the plaudits of an audience who had for so many years been delighted by her extraordinary talent. Madame Mara, who had frequently evinced a degree of hauteur incompatible with her claims to public favour, was in private life an extremely affable and an agreeable companion. For several years I was in the habit of visiting her, and during that time I never witnessed in her any deviation from the polite manners of a gentlewoman. The importance Mara publicly assumed might have

been a species of policy, attended perhaps by advantage on the continent; but in England, where modest merit is so highly estimated, it could not but produce an opposite effect. For artists to feel proud of their successful exertions is natural; but while they enjoy the gratifying rewards bestowed on their superior talents, which, by the by, is a sort of flattery to their faces, they should wear their "blushing honours" with grace, and receive them with due humility.

Among the lovers of music who honoured Madame Mara with her presence were the Prince of Wales, Lord Hampden, Mr. E. Stephenson, &c.

Mr. E. Stephenson, the banker, had perhaps the best and the most valuable collection of Cremona violins of any private gentleman in England. I am, however, inclined to think that these are frequently more estimated on account of their scarcity, (like strawberries in January,) than their valuable qualities. As the appellation of 'Cremona fiddles' may not be generally understood, I will take this opportunity to explain it. These instruments were made by two Italians, named Amati and Straduarius, at Cremona in the Milanese; and like the well-known Sedan-chairs, originally made in France, go by the name of the town in which they were first manufactured. That there exists a sort of mania amongst certain connois-

seurs in fiddles, (as in regard to pictures,) is not to be doubted, as the following fact will show: Mr. Hay, a former excellent leader of the King's band of musicians, produced on his favourite violin, made by Klotz, a German, a tone so sweet and powerful, that he had been frequently solicited to part with it, and was, on one occasion, offered for it by a noble lord three hundred pounds in cash, and an annuity, *durante vita*, of one hundred pounds! Mr. Hay, however, possessing a handsome independence, and not being desirous to part with his instrument, rejected the offer, and dying some years afterwards, this *rara avis*, at the subsequent sale of his effects, produced but forty pounds! The first time I met Mr. Stephenson was (several years ago) at the dinner-table of Mr. Cipriani, son of the late eminent artist, at his house in the King's Mews, where I also met Mr. Brummel (a gentleman connected with the administration of Mr. Pitt) and Major Parker. The major, who had served in the American war, was intelligent and entertaining. On being asked how he passed his time on ship-board, during his voyage to America, he replied,—"I sometimes (to keep off ennui) walked the quarter-deck, sometimes read, and sometimes took a draught of wine." On its being said, "What! take a draught of wine!" he added, "yes; for as we were allowed

but a pint a day, it was as well disposed of in a draught as in any other way." Mr. Cipriani succeeded Mr. Chinnery, (after the latter had absconded, *minus* sixty thousand pounds of the public money,) as first clerk in the Treasury, and continued to hold that distinguished and important office with honour to the time of his death. Mr. Chinnery was reputed to be a great lover of music; and, after his flight, it was said in a certain assembly, that his peculation proceeded from his extravagant custom of giving concerts. A more absurd reason for his delinquency could not be adduced, because several of the most eminent musicians, Crosdill, Viotti, Salomon, &c., who visited him, received no remuneration whatever; and the few he paid were obtained at so small a price as sufficiently refutes the assertion, at least as far as relates to music. To prove this, the following will suffice: When I played the principal oboe and concertos at Salomon's popular concerts at Hanover Square, in the year 1796, Salomon, on one of the nights said to me, "Mr. Chinnery has requested me to say, that he will be glad if you will perform at his concert on Sunday evening next. You will meet your old friend Crosdill there, Viotti, and myself; and he begged me to add, that as it will be on a Sunday night, when there is nothing to do, he will pay you one

guinea." Feeling indignant at the proposition, I replied,—"What would you think of me if I were to play for a person so situated in life as Mr. Chinnery is, for one guinea, when you, a brother professor, pay me three?"

On the 6th of February Mrs. Billington first appeared in the part of Rosetta, in the opera of 'Love in a Village.' Though she had been seriously ill, her voice retained all its power and sweetness. She sustained the part with transcendent talent, and delighted an elegant and overflowing audience. She had the good taste to introduce Dr. Boyce's beautiful duet, 'Together let us range the fields,' which was charmingly sung by her and Incledon, and was loudly encored. Dr. Boyce's duet ought to convince the mere theorists of the day that science and melody may be united by genius. Amongst the fashionables present that evening was Mr. Jekyl, the witty barrister, who had with him a gentleman from the country. When the curtain rose and discovered Rosetta and Lucinda, in the first scene, the applause being great, Mrs. Billington, who had prodigiously increased in bulk, curtsied to the audience, on which the country gentleman said to his friend,—"Is that Rosetta?"—"No, sir," replied Mr. Jekyl; "it is not Rosetta, it is Grand Cairo."

A few nights before I attended a concert, in which Mrs. Billington sang two songs, given by H. P—, Esq., to whom I occasionally gave musical instruction. This gentleman had but recently recovered from a serious accident, which happened under the following circumstances :—Mr. P., having had a party to dinner, during which the bottle circulated freely, had the misfortune afterwards to fall from the top to the bottom of his drawing-room stairs, where he was taken up by his family and servants in a state of insensibility. A messenger was instantly despatched for his intimate friend, Surgeon M—, who resided in the same street; but that gentleman having been called to the country professionally, the servant was sent two or three streets off to require the attendance of the celebrated Surgeon H—. That anatomical leviathan, who had also had a dinner party, came, "flushed with a purple grace," and being shown into the unfortunate gentleman's bedchamber, he, after a careful examination, pronounced both his arms to be broken. On the fractured limbs being bandaged, this luminary took his leave, and his fee of course, till the morrow. The following morning early, Mr. P—'s professional friend, who had just returned from the country, hastened to his house, and on being informed of the extent of his injury, inquired at what hour the great surgeon

had been called in; and being informed that it was in the evening after dinner, he said, "If that's the case, I will take the liberty of examining the limbs;" and, taking off the bandages, he ascertained that only one arm was broken! "This," said he, "illustrates the old adage completely, that 'wine makes a man see double!'"

Mr. Harris, who was indefatigable in the management of his theatre, brought out, on the 19th of February, Dibdin's new comic opera, 'The Cabinet.' The music was entirely new, no part of it being compiled, and the names of the composers, as numerous as those of a Spanish grandee, were Rauzzini, Braham, Davy, Reeve, Corri, and Moorhead. The most admired pieces were Braham's first ballad 'My beautiful maid,' and the polacca, 'No more by sorrow,' which were both encored; Signora Storace's air, 'The bird that sings,' which she sang and acted inimitably twice, and the hunting song by Incledon, in giving which his fine volume of voice filled the whole theatre. "The first movement of the overture," says a critic, "did not evince much ability; but the rondo (powerfully aided by W. T. Parke's oboe) was very effective, and was greatly applauded." This opera became very popular.

In the year 1783 the actors of the two London theatres (particularly those of Covent Garden)

used a chophouse in Duke's Court, Bow Street, Covent Garden, called Jupp's, from the name of the man who then kept it. At this house (which was very respectable) there was every day in the week, Sundays excepted, an ordinary, or what is now called a *table d'hôte*, which being attended by theatrical performers, the elder Bannister, Lee Lewis, Dubellamy, &c., attracted many others, amongst whom was a gentleman of the legal profession, named A——n, nicknamed "the little lawyer." This person, who was in height about four feet six inches, had a stern tiger-like countenance, finely carved by the small-pox; was dressed in black clothes; wore a brown forensic wig; and had an appetite which would not have disgraced a cormorant. This gentleman, who was almost a constant attendant at the dinner table, was overlooked one fast-day by Lee Lewis, who said to Bannister, sitting next to him, "What has become of the little lawyer? I don't see him here today."—"Oh," said Bannister, "you will find him behind that immense pile of salt fish opposite to you. Although the little lawyer was not then visible, his powers of deglutition were such, that in five minutes he had so far ate himself into sight that he could be identified as far downwards as the chin, which exhibited shining symptoms of the usual concomitant of egg-sauce having formed

a part of the repast. Bannister, who was at all times ready with his *jeu de mot*, addressing the little lawyer, said, " I am happy, sir, to see you are safely returned from your travels in grease" (Greece). Dubellamy, another of the party, was a favourite singer of that day; he had a clear and sweet tenor voice; was of a dissatisfied and fretful temper; and, like most of the actors, whenever he obtained more than common applause, thought he was entitled to an increase of salary. This performer, who had for a considerable time, though unsuccessfully, been importuning Mr. Harris, the manager of Covent Garden Theatre, to grant him some addition, coming into Jupp's whilst Bannister was preparing some celery to eat with an expected rump-steak, and beginning to complain in his usual and tiresome strain, Bannister, putting the salad dish upon a sort of shelf above his head, said in sport, " I am sorry, Dubellamy, that you have not succeeded, particularly as my salary (celery) has been raised." Dubellamy now broke out not only into complaint, but invective; on which Bannister observed, " If my salary (celery) being raised hurts your feelings, it shall, as you see, (taking down the dish,) be lowered again in a minute !"

The room at Jupp's, which was for many years frequented by men of talent and wit, such as

" were wont to set the table in a roar," is now, to prove " to what base uses we may return," occupied by boxers and gentlemen of the fancy, who place themselves on an equality with these professors of the *argumentum baculinum*, by the patronage and countenance they afford them.

Among the demonstrations of loyalty, in celebration of the peace concluded between this country and France, none were more splendid than those at Vauxhall Gardens, on the 26th of July, which were honoured by the presence of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. The illuminations, the concert, and the fireworks, were all of a superior description, and afforded high gratification to the numerous and elegant audience. His Royal Highness departed at an early hour.

Mrs. Billington having concluded her splendid theatrical career at the English theatres, was engaged by the proprietor of the Italian Opera House, and appeared on that stage on the 4th of December, in Nasolini's serious opera, ' Merope.' Her brother, Mr. Weichsell, was also engaged (to the exclusion of Salomon) to lead the band. The *entrée* of Mrs. Billington was hailed with enthusiasm, as well as her performance throughout the opera.

To the deep regret of the musical world, Cimarosa, the celebrated composer, departed this life in the year 1801. Cimarosa was born

in the year 1751, and was a native of Capo di Monte in Naples. He studied under Durante, at the *conservatorio* of Loretta; and such were his docility and sweetness of temper, that they gained him the affection of all who knew him. So great was the fame he had acquired as a composer, that he received from Paris an order to compose a cantata for the birth of the Dauphin, which was performed by a band of more than a hundred performers. It is stated that his success was more rapid than that of any composer of the last century, excepting Piccini, and that the celebrity of his comic opera of 'L' Italiana in Londra' was nearly as extensive as that of the most popular of Piccini's productions. In 1787 he succeeded Sarti as composer at the court of St. Petersburg, where he continued about three years. He then went to Madrid, and afterwards to Vienna, from whence he returned to Italy. During his continuance in Naples he is said to have taken part with the French, and to have narrowly escaped the fate of a rebel and a traitor. The music of Cimarosa, which consists principally of comic operas, is in great esteem on the continent. His works exhibit throughout traits of extraordinary genius, and of an imagination always new and always brilliant. Those which have been most celebrated are—'Il Pittore Paregino;' 'L' Ita-

liana in Londra,' composed in the year 1780; 'Le trame deluse;' and 'Il Fanatico burlato,' in 1787; 'Il Matrimonio segreto;' 'Amor rende sagace,' composed at Vienna; 'I fraci Amanti;' and 'Le Astuzie feminine,' both at Naples; in 1794, 'L' Impegno superato;' and L' Impresario in Augusta,' in the following year; 'I Nemici generosi,' in 1796. Of his serious operas we know only five: 'Giunio Bruto;' 'Ines de Castro;' 'La Vendetta di Nino;' 'Penelope;' and 'Gli Orazi e Curiazi.'

1803.

The opera of 'Merope' was repeated at the King's Theatre on the 8th of January, when Mrs. Billington was again received with unbounded applause. At the end of the opera she was seized with a sudden, and as it proved, severe indisposition, in consequence of which she was prevented from re-appearing till Saturday the 19th of March, when she again performed in the opera of 'Merope' to a crowded audience, who greeted her return with loud cheers. Madame Bolla, who was not engaged this season, was succeeded by Signora Gerbini, who appeared for the first time in Cimarosa's beautiful comic opera 'I due Baroni.' This lady's acting and singing were so

mediocre, that, had it not been for the superior abilities of Viganoni and Morelli, the comic opera would have been scarcely deserving notice.

Winter, who was engaged as composer to the King's Theatre, produced, on the 31st of May, an entirely new serious opera, intitled 'Calypso.' Billington, as Calypso, displayed, as well in the recitatives as in the airs, uncommon taste and animation, and was enthusiastically applauded. She was admirably supported by Viganoni. The music of Calypso is ingenious and pleasing. At the fall of the curtain 'God save the King' was called for, and was twice sung by Mrs. Billington, amidst peals of applause.

In consequence of the continued illness of Mrs. Billington, Miss Parke (afterwards Mrs. Beardmore) sang her part at the Covent Garden oratorios. She executed the airs in 'The Messiah' with great taste and judgment, particularly, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' which she gave with great feeling and effect. The band was led by Mr. Weichsell. The concert of ancient music, honoured by the presence of their Majesties, and the vocal concert, were deprived of the aid of Mrs. Billington during the early part of their seasons, in consequence of her protracted indisposition.

From the success of their lately produced musical performances, the two winter theatres had no operatic novelties of any importance.

The Ode for his Majesty's birthday was performed at St. James's on the 4th of June. It was composed by Sir William Parsons, master of the King's band.

Having formerly, for many years, assisted in the odes performed at the court of St. James's on the 4th of June, the birthday of His Majesty George the Third, I had opportunities of viewing the council-chamber, in which the drawing-rooms were held, the furniture, throne, and tapestry of which were extremely old and dilapidated. In the year 1793, the most furious and sanguinary period of the French Revolution, in which Louis the Sixteenth was decapitated, I again attended on the King's birthday, and was much gratified by observing the alterations and improvements which had taken place, and which, in those baneful times, had with propriety been deemed necessary to correspond with the dignity of the King of a great and free people. The old brass chandeliers, which had probably been in use more than a century, had been superseded by modern ones of elegant fashion. The throne, of crimson velvet, (which from age had become as faded as the parliamentary robes of the senior peer,) was so dilapi-

dated, and the fissures in the cushions were so large, that the tickings containing the stuffings were eminently conspicuous. Instead of the old-fashioned looking-glasses, new and splendid ones appeared. The neat little pair of brass-nozzled bellows, which had time out of mind hung by the fire-side, had vanished, and the almost colourless tapestry, which had long lined the walls, was removed, and some of the most beautiful ever beheld had succeeded it. While these alterations were in contemplation, the King displayed a remarkable instance of retention of memory. On its being observed that new tapestry would be necessary, His Majesty instantly pointed out to the Lord Chamberlain (Salisbury) certain trunks containing the exquisite tapestry presented to Charles the First when Prince of Wales, whilst the negotiations were proceeding relative to his intended marriage (which did not take place) with the Infanta of Spain. These trunks with their contents had remained in their depository ever since the year 1618, and were found in the exact situation the King had described.

It would appear extraordinary that this benificent monarch should have attacks made on his life, had it not been proved that they were uniformly the acts of lunatics, from whose indiscriminate violence he was miraculously preserved by

Providence enveloping him in his impervious and invisible mantle. In the year 1786 he was assailed by Margaret Nicholson, who, while the King was alighting from his carriage at St. James's, under the pretence, "for madness has method in it," of presenting to him a petition, made an effort to stab him to the heart; and in the year 1800, on an evening, the 15th of May, when his Majesty had commanded a play at the Theatre-Royal Drury Lane, as he was entering his box amidst the cheers of the audience, a pistol loaded with ball was levelled and fired at him, by a man named Hatfield, who had been a trumpeter in one of his regiments of the line. This unhappy man, when he pointed the deadly weapon at his Sovereign, sat on the bench in the pit nearest to the orchestra, and after the commission of the dire act made no effort to escape. The King, who possessed great personal courage, heard the whizzing of the ball, which fortunately passed him, and was subsequently found imbedded in a pannel of the box. He however kept his place most firmly, and appeared to be no further affected than to make some observations on it to his nobles in attendance; whilst the audience, who filled the theatre to excess, instantly rose in defence of their beloved Sovereign. The culprit, who seemed perfectly indifferent, was immediately secured, and

having been hoisted over the railing of the orchestra, was taken into the music-room of the theatre, (a sitting-room for the musicians when not engaged in the orchestra,) where he was detained by the police officers till Sir William Addington, then chief magistrate at Bow Street, was sent for; on whose arrival an investigation took place, attended by his Royal Highness the Duke of York. This extraordinary attempt becoming known, which it immediately did, all hearts and voices united in reprobation of the assassin; and doubtless, had he not been removed to a place of security, he would have been torn piecemeal by an affectionate and exasperated populace. When the diurnal prints conveyed the horrible intelligence to the country, the people were thrown into the utmost consternation, and loyal addresses from every part of the kingdom poured in, congratulating his Majesty on his providential escape. Amongst those from the corporate bodies, was one from the Royal Society of Musicians, which, though it could not perhaps boast elegance of style, or force of expression, could not be exceeded in loyalty, affection, or gratitude. This address was written by me; and, at a general meeting of the Royal Society, it having obtained the preference over others which had been prepared, was, at the ensuing drawing-room

at the court of St. James's presented to his Majesty, by the late much respected Earl of Chesterfield, then honorary president of the society, and was graciously received. At length the trial of the unfortunate culprit Hatfield came on in the court of King's Bench, when the popular counsellor Mr. (afterwards Lord) Erskine pleaded for him; and through his great legal knowledge, his eloquence, and the evidence brought forward, obtained for him an acquittal on the score of insanity. The wretched man was, in consequence of the verdict of the jury, delivered into the custody of the keeper of the hospital for lunatics, and was most properly consigned to the criminal ward, in which he continued till he died. The calamity of madness, the greatest human nature can suffer, and to which both king and peasant are equally liable, exhibits almost as much variety as the human countenance. Without presuming to enter into a definition, it may be observed that this revolting act of Hatfield did not perhaps prove any fixed hatred towards his Sovereign, for on his trial it appeared that he had, during his military career, received a severe wound on the head, which brought on mental aberration whenever he had drank to excess; and many instances show that when the mind is wholly inverted, nothing will satiate the fury of the maniac more than

imbruing his hands in the blood of those most dear to him,—his wife, or his helpless infant! As the character of a military trumpeter is not much understood in civic society, I will briefly describe it. He is commonly a man of irregular habits, shut out from all society except that of his comrades and his horse, suffering (from the smallness of his pay) many privations; and being without a thought for to-morrow, will seize his enjoyments wherever he can find them. If the necessary gratification afforded by eating be put into the balance with that of drinking, his predilection to the latter will turn the scale, whereby he can accommodate himself to the liquid staple of any nation on which the chance of war may throw him.

Vauxhall Gardens opened for the season, on the 4th of June, with a grand gala in honour of his Majesty's birthday, when, as usual, every species of ingenuity and elegance were displayed to do honour to the occasion. Hook's organ concerto was admirable. Two or three months ago, I went with Hook the composer and Dignum the singer to eat oysters at a respectable shop in St. Martin's Lane, where we were shown into a handsome room on the first floor, and were supplied with that testaceous fish in very good style. On some roasted oysters being placed before us,

Hook said to the female who had brought them, "Don't you think it cruel to roast oysters in the fire?"—"No, sir," said she in a flippant manner, "it is not more cruel than skinning live eels, and neither of them care a farthing about it after it is over!" Having had as many as we required, the female being desired to tell what we had to pay, replied, three shillings for two dozen. "What!" said Hook jocosely, "eighteen-pence a dozen! Why, then, I must say that you are just what I thought you,—a sell-fish (selfish) woman."

In August I went to Margate, with a determination to pass a quiet fortnight. The morning after my arrival there, however, Mr. Braham (who was performing at the theatre) called on me, and requested I would give him my assistance in the orchestra on his two remaining nights. This I had no hesitation in complying with, and attended two performances of the opera of 'The Cabinet,' in which he performed with great applause to crowded houses. The band of this little theatre, which held but sixty pounds, was excellent. It consisted chiefly of musicians from London, whose principal object was sea-bathing. During my stay at Margate Incledon came to play there six nights. Being with him one morning at a rehearsal of the 'Beggar's Opera,' I witnessed a piece of provincial theatrical ingenuity

which was new to me. In the last act, when the bell should toll as the signal for Macheath going to execution, it was discovered that there was no bell in the theatre. "Necessity is the mother of invention," said Mr. W. W—s, the manager, "therefore run to my house and bring the frying-pan." The frying-pan being brought, he passed a small cord through the hole in the handle of it, and having suspended it at the side scenes, (off the stage,) he struck it gently with a muffled drum-stick, thereby producing a sound which, though not equally sonorous and awful as the bell of St. Sepulchre, was nevertheless sufficient for the purpose. The following day I dined with Mr. Le Bas, the master of the ceremonies at Margate, where I met Mr. Reynolds the dramatist, and others. Having sat an hour after dinner, I called on Incledon, and walked with him to the pier, to witness what is called Hoy-Fair, where those who had been laughed at the preceding day whilst landing from the packet had assembled to laugh in turn at the ludicrous and weather-beaten figures who disembarked that evening. Here we were joined by Mr. Johnstone of Covent Garden Theatre, who had been dining on board with Captain S—e, commander of the line-of-battle ship stationed in Margate roads. He informed us of the melancholy fate of poor John Moorhead,

the composer of the excellent music of ' La Perouse,' &c. He stated that Moorhead had, by uncontrollable circumstances, been reduced to the extremity of engaging on board Captain S—e's ship, as master of the band, in which situation he received every indulgence which the service would allow, and, that one day having permission to go on shore, he repaired to a field near Sandwich, and put a period to his existence, by suspending himself to a gate with his pocket handkerchief, where he was found lifeless the same evening. Moorhead was a well educated and gentlemanly young man; but the occasional violence of his temper was such, as left no doubt of his labouring sometimes under temporary aberrations of mind. Peace to his manes!

As what is highly fashionable in London finds its way into the country, I was by no means surprised at meeting Mrs. Billington at Winchester, where she was engaged to sing, together with Mr. Harrison, at the music meeting on the 5th, 6th, and 7th, of October. She was in fine voice, and delighted the lovers of music by her fascinating performance. Mr. Weichsell led the band, and the veteran Fischer played concertos on the oboe. If Fischer did not evince the vigour of former days, his sweetness of tone and purity of taste were undiminished.

In the year 1783 the above-mentioned excellent singer, Mr. Harrison, being on the point of visiting his friend, Dr. Kirkland of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, in Leicestershire, pressed me to join him there as soon as Vauxhall Gardens (where I then performed) were closed: to this I partly assented; but some particular circumstance occurring to prevent me, I received a letter from him containing a good-natured threat from the Doctor, that if I did not come he would *murder* me! To this I replied that I had no fears on that account, the Doctor being remarkable for *saving* lives, not *destroying* them. Dr. Kirkland, whom I afterwards knew, was a plain country gentleman both in dress and manners. He was very fond of music, and played on the oboe after the fashion of the old school. When about to amuse himself with that instrument, he would say to his servant, "Betty, bring my oboe reeds from off the cask in the ale cellar," the usual place he had them deposited in, perhaps for the purpose of preventing them from becoming dry. As a surgeon he had extensive practice amongst the nobility and gentry of his county, as well as others; and society at large are indebted to him for the discovery he made of arresting the progress of mortification. I have myself known three instances of the success of this important

discovery. The first was the Doctor's youngest son, (Thomas) who was in London walking the hospitals. The second, Mr. Mazzinghi, father of the well-known composer of that name; and the third, the late Marquis Cholmondeley, who having been laid up for a considerable time with a bad leg, which at length exhibiting signs of mortification, it was considered that nothing but amputation could save him. Mazzinghi, the composer, whom Lord Cholmondeley had liberally patronised, learning the state to which his patron was reduced, sought an interview with his lordship, and explained the means by which, in a similar case, his father's limb had been saved. He exhorted him therefore to give it a trial; and this being acceded to, with the consent of his own medical advisers, a poultice of porter-grounds was applied, whereby the mortification was stopped, and his lordship lived many years after. Dr. Kirkland was an avowed enemy to amputation, saying, "A limb is too precious a member to be trifled with, and if it costs twelve months' labour to save one the time is well bestowed." In fact, he was a man of extraordinary ability, and so bad a customer to the timber merchant, that if every county possessed a practitioner of his skill and perseverance, there would not be seen a brace

of wooden legs throughout England, the parishes of Greenwich and Chelsea excepted.

Mr. Harris, the spirited proprietor of Covent Garden Theatre, produced, on the 13th of December a new comic opera, written by Dibdin, called 'The English Fleet in 1342.' The music, entirely new, was composed by Mr. Braham. The songs of Braham and Storace were by no means so effective as those of the same performers in 'The Cabinet.' The greatest favourite of the evening was the duet by Braham and Incledon, 'All's well,' which was encored. In the overture was appropriately introduced the national air 'Rule Britannia,' with variations for the oboe, which had been composed by me, as I discovered when it came to be rehearsed. This was totally unexpected on my part, and may be accounted for thus: some little time before 'The English Fleet' came out, meeting Mr. Braham near his residence in Leicester Square, he requested I would lend him one or two of my concertos, to enable him to see the capacities of the oboe, as he intended to write for that instrument in his forthcoming new opera. I immediately sent him two of my manuscripts; and on the overture being rehearsed, I found he had introduced into it a considerable part of one of them in the first movement, and that he

had taken my rondo of 'Rule Britannia,' containing the principal variation, for the last movement. From having played these concertos very often in public, several of the musicians in the orchestra, who had assisted in them, considered me to be the composer of the overture to 'The English Fleet,' till I undeceived them. 'The English fleet' encountered a violent storm of opposition during its first three nights; but through the skill of an able pilot, Mr. Harris, it was at length brought into safe and secure anchorage, where, with flying colours, it afterwards rode triumphant. Although it may appear incredible, it is nevertheless a fact, that Braham received for this opera the largest sum ever paid for the copyright of a musical piece. The following short list of prices, which have been given by publishers at various periods, will show the difference in money or in judgment:

Dr. Arne, in the year 1763, received for his famous opera, 'Artaxerxes,' 60 guineas.

Mr. Shield, in the year 1781, for his popular two act musical piece, 'Rosina,' 40*l.*

Mr. Storace, in the year 1791, for his opera, 'The Siege of Belgrade,' 1000*l.*

Mr. Braham, in the year 1804, for his opera, 'The English Fleet in 1342,' 1000 guineas.

Samuel Arnold, Mus. Doc., was born on the 10th of August, 1740, and received the first rudi-

ments of his musical education under Mr. Gates, master of the young gentlemen in the chapel royal. This was afterwards completed under Dr. Nares. Through the patronage of the Princesses Amelia and Caroline, and at their express request, he was introduced at the usual age of admission into the King's chapel. So ardent was Mr. Arnold's application to the study of music, and so rapid had been his progress, that, before he had attained his twenty-third year, his extraordinary merit induced the managers of Covent Garden Theatre to engage him as composer to their establishment. After the unbounded applause which had been bestowed upon his music in the popular opera of 'The Maid of the Mill,' he felt an irresistible impulse to exert his talents on an oratorio. He therefore composed his sacred drama of 'The Curse of Saul,' in the year 1767. This oratorio established the character of its composer, and encouraged him to proceed. In the following year he produced the oratorio of 'Abimelech;' this was succeeded in 1773, by 'The Prodigal Son;' and in 1777 by 'The Resurrection.' During the intervals between these productions he brought forward several other popular works. In the year 1769 Dr. Arnold purchased Mary-le-bone Gardens, which he adorned in a beautiful style, and for which he composed the music to several

burlettas. The fame which 'The Prodigal Son' acquired was such, that in the year 1773, previously to the installation of Lord North as Chancellor of the University of Oxford, application was made to Mr. Arnold for permission to perform it on that occasion. The handsome manner in which this was granted induced the University to offer him an honorary title in music, which he politely declined, preferring instead of it the usual academical mode of graduation. His exercise was performed in the regular manner; and when it was presented to Dr. William Hayes, the professor, for examination, he returned the score unopened, saying, "Sir, it is unnecessary for me to scrutinise an exercise composed by the author of 'The Prodigal Son.'" On the death of the late Dr. Nares, in the beginning of the year 1783, Dr. Arnold was appointed organist to his Majesty, and composer for the chapels royal. In these situations he furnished a considerable number of services and anthems, which are among the most estimable of his works. In the following year he was appointed one of the sub-directors of the grand commemoration of Handel, which took place in Westminster Abbey, and in common with the other sub-directors was presented by the King with a medal in token of his approbation. In 1786, at the particular desire, and under the immediate patronage of the King, Dr. Arnold un-

dertook to superintend the publication of a magnificent edition in score of the works of Handel, which he completed in thirty-six folio volumes. From these he compiled two fine oratorios, ' The Redemption,' and ' Time and truth.' Towards the latter part of the year 1789 Dr. Arnold was appointed, with full powers, conductor of the Academy of ancient music, which situation he retained until his death. A few years before his death he had a fall whilst in the act of reaching down a book from his library, which snapped a tendon near its insertion at the knee, and which, by occasioning a tedious confinement, brought on a train of disorders that preyed on his constitution, and no doubt hastened his dissolution. His last scene was preceded by a long and painful illness, which baffled medical skill. He died with resigned composure, on the 22nd of October 1802. His remains were interred in Westminster Abbey. The three choirs of Westminster, St. Paul's, and the Chapel Royal, requested permission to attend the funeral, and they sang the usual service, the funeral anthem, and a new anthem composed for the occasion by Dr. Calcot; " I heard a voice from heaven say, Write, Blessed are they that die in the Lord, for they shall rest from their labours." Dr. Arnold was the composer of seven oratorios, and fifty-five English operas, besides a great number of pantomimes, odes, serenatas, and burlettas.

1804.

The operatic company at the King's Theatre was this season greatly strengthened by the arrival of Madame Grassini, who appeared for the first time in England on the 14th of January, in Andreozzi's serious opera, 'La Vergine del Sole.' Grassini's voice, a counter tenor of fine quality, was well regulated, her cadences were highly finished, and she sang with taste and expression. She was also an excellent actress. Mrs. Billington appeared on the 4th of February in Winter's opera, 'Calypso,' with increased effect, and on the 28th of April she and Grassini performed together in an entire new opera seria, composed by Winter, called, 'Il ratto di Proserpine.' In this opera Billington and Grassini produced an uncommon effect, and in the pathetic duet in the second act their fine voices harmonised delightfully. The music of this opera is a masterly composition. Madame Bolla being re-engaged, the comic opera, through her own exertions and those of Viganoni and Morelli, became again fashionable.

The oratorios at Covent Garden Theatre, which commenced for the Lent season on the 17th of February, were again aided by the powerful attractions of Mrs. Billington. The performance was a selection, in which she sang 'Holy, holy,'

and ‘ Sweet bird,’ with extraordinary effect. The violin accompaniment to the latter was performed in a brilliant style by Mr. Weichsell. It concluded with ‘ God save the King,’ in which two new verses were happily introduced, the one allusive to the threatened invasion by Bonaparte, the other to the melancholy illness of his Majesty, in which the fervent wishes of the country were expressed for the restoration of his health.

Mrs. Billington was engaged at the concert of Ancient Music and at the Vocal concert, both of which were this year held at the Hanover Square Rooms for the first time.

The winter theatres exhibited no striking musical novelty this season but the operas of ‘ The Cabinet’ and ‘ The English fleet,’ in which Braham, Incledon, and Storace, exerted their powerful and successful efforts, and were as much admired as ever.

Incledon being subsequently rendered for a short time unable to perform, in consequence of severe hoarseness, he became as uncomfortable as a fish out of water. So fond was he of the stage, that in order to act one of his favourite characters, that of Macheath above all, he would have arisen from his bed at midnight. He was attended by his friend Dr. Mosely, a physician of great skill; but as the Doctor could not remove his

complaint instantly, Incledon became impatient, and had recourse to some advertised lozenges ; but without effect. Complaining in the green-room one morning during a rehearsal, he was, according to a preconcerted plan formed by some of the actors, strongly urged to try the " never-failing" effect of an amulet; not by the usual mode of appending that charm round the neck, but by frequently sucking it. Notwithstanding the absurdity of the thing, Incledon actually called at the recommended shop, in Bond Street, the master of which had been prepared for furthering the jest, and purchased one from the shopman. Having sucked the amulet till bed time, he retired to rest, and on the ensuing morning, as soon as he had arisen and had taken a suck or two, he began to try his voice, and thinking it greatly improved, he exclaimed to his wife, " There, my dear, don't you hear the difference? My voice is not only clearer, but I can sing two notes higher than I could do yesterday." He therefore continued to enjoy his remedy, full of faith in its virtues, whilst his friends enjoyed their laugh at his credulity. Incledon, however, getting well, his praises of the amulet resounded among his friends in the theatre, till one of the conspirators, to bring about the *dénouement*, delivered a message to him from the master of the shop where he had

purchased the " charm," purporting that he had been sorry to find his shopman had by mistake, during his absence, sold him a pebble instead of an amulet, and that he therefore by his friend returned him the money. Incledon, when he found that he had been hoaxed, was full of wrath: his anger however soon subsided, and he consoled himself by saying, " Well, it is after all but hoax for hoax, for one of the venders of lozenges has undertaken to dispose of forty pounds' worth of tickets for my benefit, in consequence of my having permitted him to hoax the public, by publishing a letter I wrote to him, by *his* desire, in which I stated that I had been cured of my obstinate hoarseness through the virtues of his invaluable nostrum." Incledon might have recollected that, soon after he first came to Covent Garden Theatre, in 1790, he was one of a brace of hoaxers of that day. There was a public house of the lowest class, opposite to the police office in Bow Street, Covent Garden, called " The Brown Bear," then much used by some of the actors, and some of the prisoners brought up for examination. This house was greatly resorted to by John Kemble and others of Drury Lane Theatre, who at a late hour adjourned to another public house in Covent Garden market, called " The Finish," to drink in the morning. The former, " The

Brown Bear," was famous for a compound liquor, made by a mixture of beer, eggs, sugar, and brandy, called " egg-hot," alias " flannel." Incledon and Irish Johnstone (commonly called Jack Johnstone) were partial to this liquor, and frequently indulged themselves with it during the evening at the theatre, and, as a good jest, occasionally obtained it in the following manner. When there happened to be several of the ladies of the theatre in the green-room, they took that opportunity to represent the hard case of Mrs. So-and-so, the widow of a provincial actor, who dying, had left her and her children in great distress; adding, at the same time, that they were desirous of collecting a trifle to enable them to purchase some *flannel* during that inclement season. Having by such means received four or five shillings, they retired to their dressing-room, from whence they despatched their man, the dresser, to the Brown Bear for a quart of egg-hot, alias *flannel*, and occasionally had the modesty to take a part of it into the green-room, and presenting a glass to each of the females who had subscribed, requested they would drink success to the widow and the *flannel*. This system, in favour of this and that distressed family, they had practised several times, till the dresser happening to speak of it as a good joke in the hearing of Mr. Q—,

the comedian, of the same theatre, he, by a bribe, prevailed on the man, whilst bringing in a future pot, to suffer him to infuse into it a dose of ipecacuanha, of sufficient power to sicken them of such exploits in future, and convince them that joking was a game at which more than two could play.

Fischer, the celebrated oboe player, died in the early part of this year. He was seized with apoplexy whilst performing in a concert at Buckingham House, in the presence of their Majesties, and fell on the double bass instrument of the musician next to him. In the early part of life he was retained at the court of the Elector of Saxony, and afterwards went into the service of Frederick the Great of Prussia, at Berlin, who was much pleased with his performance. Some time after his arrival at Berlin, the King, in a concert he gave at court, played a concerto on the German flute of his own composition, which Fischer (not knowing the disposition of his Majesty,) praised extravagantly. This freedom so displeased Frederick, that one of his officers the following day kindly dropped a hint to Fischer, that if he valued his liberty he had better make his retreat from Berlin as soon as possible. The hint thus kindly dropped Fischer picked up, and departed for England. He arrived in this country under very

favourable circumstances, the oboe not being in a high state of cultivation, the two principal oboe players, Vincent and Simpson, using the old English oboe, an instrument which in shape and tone bore some resemblance to that yclept a *post-horn*. Fischer had so devoted himself to study, that, from the consequent little intercourse he had with society, he had nearly forgotten his own language (German), without having acquired any other. Soon after he was, unhappily for both parties, married to the accomplished daughter of Gainsborough, the celebrated painter. The latter, an excellent violin player, I often met at the parties of a gentleman I visited. Gainsborough, who was a lively companion, speaking of the oddities of Fischer, said that whilst walking with him in Pall Mall, a gentleman just before them treading on some ice had a severe fall, on which Fischer starting, sputtered out—"I never did that—I never in all my life made a slip."—"In a fortnight afterwards," added Gainsborough, "he married my daughter!" The tone of Fischer was soft and sweet, his style expressive, and his execution was at once neat and brilliant. He had gratified the admirers of music for many years, but his powers had for a considerable time been declining. Thus it is with artists of genius and enterprise: that meteor, perfection, like a "Will o' the wisp,"

leads them on till they approach so near that they think they can "clutch it," when it imperceptibly recedes till they close their mortal career for ever!

Vauxhall Gardens opened for the season on the 6th of June, with an entertainment of an imposing description, intitled "A military Fête." The gardens on that occasion were brilliantly illuminated, and appropriately decorated with flags and trophies, in variegated lamps. Marquees and tents were pitched, representing an encampment, and in the grand display of fireworks, the bombardment of a citadel and the springing of a mine were admirably imitated. The concert (in which I was first engaged as principal oboe and concerto player) consisted of military pieces; and among the songs were, 'Come, if you dare,'—'To arms,'—'Rule Britannia,'—and 'God save the King.' In the latter the whole audience, amounting to ten thousand persons, joined their voices in the supplication for his Majesty. The effect it had cannot be described. It was, however, deeply affecting, and moistened every eye.

Soon after Vauxhall closed I went to Rochester, to perform a concerto, &c. on the oboe, at a concert given for his own benefit by Mr. S—r, a respectable piano-forte player of that city. On arriving there, I asked Mr. S—r if he expected many persons to be present. He replied in his slow, me-

thodical way—"I can't exactly tell: but I'm sure of one; for 'Squire T— has promised me that he will come." 'Squire T— attended according to his promise; but the other parts of the audience were so few, that had there been a score less, the 'squire would have had it all to himself. The pianist, however, "nothing daunted," told me the next morning that as he had no doubt he could in time bring it to answer, he should give a concert annually till it did. This determination, it struck me, might, by the time he was half ruined, place him on an equality with the actor in Cork, who, always unfortunate in his benefits, being asked how his last turned out, replied—"Oh, I came off famously last night—I only lost *eighteen pence!*"

The King's Theatre opened on the 24th of November with Winter's serious opera, 'Il ratto di Proserpine.' Billington and Grassini were both loudly applauded at their *entrée*, and throughout the performance. The terzetto, 'Mi lasci,' by them and Viganoni, was given in the first style of excellence. The house was very thinly attended, as is usually the case before Christmas.

1805.

Mrs. Billington, who had caught a cold by performing at the King's Theatre the first night to a thin house, and was not, of course, sufficiently

recovered to perform till the fashionables arrived in town, appeared on the 8th of January in Bianchi's serious opera, 'Il Trionfo del Amor Fraterno.' She was greeted with enthusiastic applause, and sang admirably. On the 29th of January Winter's serious opera, 'Zaire,' was performed. Grassini's interesting acting, and pathetic style of singing, were highly applauded. The whole of the vocal strength of the opera company appeared on the 29th of June, in Martini's beautiful opera, 'La Cosa Rara,' when Billington, Grassini, Storace, Viganoni, Braham, and Morelli, afforded a high treat to a crowded house.

Jarnovicki, that musical Hotspur, died at St. Petersburg, in the year 1804, of apoplexy. He was an accomplished violin player, and his music is melodious and pleasing. He was not, however, a profound musician, as he merely wrote the subjects and solo parts of his concertos, and employed an abler theorist than himself to harmonise them. Jarnovicki was highly patronised while in England, but his violent disposition disgusted most of his supporters. He piqued himself much on the use of the small sword, and once gave a box on the ear to the celebrated fencer St. George; but the chevalier took no further notice of the assault than by saying—"I admire his talent too much to fight him." Shortly after Jarnovicki

came to England he performed a concerto at the oratorios at Drury Lane Theatre, and in my presence challenged Mr. Shaw, the leader of the band, because he would not leave his proper station in the orchestra to accompany him. In the year 1799 Jarnovicki, finding London too hot to hold him, sought the colder region of Russia. Had Jarnovicki blended a portion of suavity of manner with his rare and commanding talent, instead of nurturing that violence of temper through which he was eternally carving his own misery, it would have ensured the continuance of the exalted patronage he possessed in England, where he might have smoothly glided down the stream of life "to that bourne from whence no traveller returns," supported by hope and resignation.

Mrs. Billington did not sing at the Covent Garden oratorios this season. They commenced on the 4th of March, when Mrs. Ashe, Mrs. Bland, Miss Munday, (afterwards Mrs. Salmon,) and Mr. Braham, displayed their several abilities with great success.

The annual benefit of the Sons of the Clergy took place as usual in St. Paul's Cathedral, on the 17th of May. The performance (which seldom varies) consisted of selections from the works of Handel, and the anthem originally composed for that charity by Dr. Boyce. The vocal parts

were sung by the gentlemen of the choir, and the instrumental parts were performed by the members of the Royal Society of Musicians, conducted by Mr. Greatorex. This performance was, during many former years, conducted by Dr. Hayes, professor of music in the university of Oxford, who, in good humour and bulk, was a complete representative of Shakspeare's fat knight, Sir John Falstaff, and was said to have nearly equalled in weight the celebrated Mr. Bright, the miller of Malden, in Essex. When the doctor came to London from Oxford, he had two places taken for him in the stage coach, from which after he was got in (a work of some difficulty) he was not removed till he arrived at his journey's end. It must not however be omitted, that Dr. Hayes, besides his suavity of manners, possessed much professional ability.

Mrs. Billington, Harrison, and Bartleman, were the leading singers at the concert of ancient music. At the vocal concert Miss I. Parke was the principal. She appeared to great advantage in Handel's popular song 'Sweet bird,' accompanied on the violin by Mr. Weichsell, who led the band.

The curiosity of the public was this season greatly excited by the two phenomena, Master Betty, called the young Roscius, who acted at

Covent Garden Theatre, and Master Mori, the young Orpheus, who fiddled at the concerts. The following anecdote is perhaps not inapplicable to them: When Louis the Fourteenth had shown Marshal Saxe his regiment of disciplined boys, (a thousand strong) of which he was extremely proud, he with great exultation asked that great general what he thought of them; when the marshal replied, "No doubt, Sire, they will make a fine regiment when they come of age."

The active manager of Covent Garden Theatre produced, on the 3d of March, a new musical piece in two acts, by Reynolds, intitled 'Out of place, or, The lake of Lausanne.' The overture and the whole of the music were composed by Reeve. "In this piece (observes a critic) the singing of Storace and Braham was tasteful and effective, and was greatly applauded. The popular Swiss *ranz des vaches*, neatly introduced in the overture, afforded ample scope for the sweet tones and brilliant execution of W. T. Parke's oboe."

Vauxhall Gardens opened for the season on the 4th of June, with a grand gala in honour of his Majesty's birthday. It was fashionably and numerously attended; and at the gala given on the 12th of August, the birthday of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, there were upwards of twelve thousand persons present.

During the latter part of this summer Signora Storace and Mr. Braham were engaged to perform six nights at the Brighton theatre. In the rehearsal of their first opera, 'The Haunted Tower,' when Braham's principal song, 'Spirit of my sainted sire,' came on, it was discovered that there were no kettle-drums, a material feature in it. The manager however promised that the drums should be in their place behind the scenes in the evening. When the regular performance had nearly reached the before-mentioned song, the drums were there; but on inquiring, it was found that no person had been provided to beat them! What was to be done? The song was coming on immediately, and there appearing no alternative but that of omitting it, Storace, who was on the spot, undertook the task, and beat them with as great precision and effect as the best kettle-drummer of them all! This circumstance being buzzed about town as a curious and clever thing, it was spoken of the next day at a party where I dined, on which an elderly Irish captain, who appeared much struck with the occurrence, exclaimed—"By the powers she is a nate lass, and I should only have one objection to having such a wife, which is, that being so ready at bating, she might one day feel an inclination, as Mr. Mullroony says, to bate a coat with a *man* in it."

Covent Garden Theatre commenced the season as usual in September. Storace and Braham having seceded, and joined the company of Drury Lane Theatre, Mr. Harris had recourse to his old system of procuring actors after the manner of Peter Pindar of supplying himself with razors. The poet, who wore a wig, performed the office of barber on himself in an uncommon and effective manner, not only shaving the beard off his chin, but the hair from his head without a looking-glass! He was equally singular in his mode of procuring his razors, buying them (as he told me) by the dozen, in Exeter Change, at the moderate price of sixpence each; whereby, if he got two or three out of the number which answered his purpose, he threw out the remainder, considering he had made a cheap purchase. On the same principle did Mr. Harris engage his actors. Finding it very difficult to obtain full houses during that uphill part of the season which precedes Christmas, he engaged actors from the provincial theatres, literally by the dozen, at very small salaries, and an article for three years, determinable on his part at the end of the first. These performers he brought out in principal characters, and the novelty of first appearances exciting the curiosity of the public, they generally attracted good houses for two or three nights; and if any

of them made a hit, he retained *them*, getting rid of the others at the end of the season. By this plan Mr. Harris afforded variety to the public, and profit to himself, at a comparatively small expense. This system, however, on account of the failures which frequently occurred among his new levies, was strongly arraigned by several admirers of the drama, particularly by his old friend Counsellor C—st, who, when the subject came on the *tapis*, observed that Mr. Harris seemed to prefer a new actor to a good one.

The before-mentioned Dr. Walcot, whom I well knew, and who in his writings styled himself *Peter Pindar*, was an eccentric character, and had many whimsical sayings. He used to call a blacksmith, the humble servant of a horse's leg, and spruce beer, deal-board broth. If he saw any one eat heartily, he would say, "that man is fit to eat for a wager tripe out of a pail with a butcher's bull-dog, and beat him;" and in speaking of pictures, (of which he was very fond) he would observe, "I never give for one more than the value of its frame, and then I am sure not to be taken in." When G—, the publisher, made a proposition to the doctor to purchase the copyright of his works, he, by letter, offered him an annuity, *durante vita*, of two hundred pounds. The doctor, however, having been informed that

G— was very anxious to have them, asked three hundred. This was replied to by G— appointing a day on which he would call on the doctor to talk the matter over with him. When the appointed day arrived, the doctor received him in complete dishabille, even to his night-cap; and, from having purposely abstained from shaving himself for three or four days, together with his complexion being naturally cadaverous, his appearance was unhealthy and forlorn; added to which, he assumed a hollow, sepulchral cough, such as would exhilarate a rich man's heir, and excite the commiseration of a sheriff's officer! It appeared, however, that G— had determined not to make any advance on the two hundred pounds *per annum* already offered, till the doctor, displaying a violent fit of coughing, (which the former thinking mended his chance,) he was induced to offer to make it two hundred and fifty pounds. This the doctor peremptorily refusing, and being apparently seized with another attack that nearly suffocated him, G— thinking it impossible that he could last long, agreed to make the annuity three hundred. This annuity was some time afterwards reduced to two hundred pounds, under the following circumstances: Doctor Walcot having, in several of his poems, unwarrantably and unjustly made his late and re-

vered majesty George the Third the subject of them, Mr. Pitt, the minister, at length most properly passed a bill through both houses of parliament to restrain such licentious conduct in future; for where is the difference between wounding the body and the mind? The publisher therefore, considering that the restraint thereby imposed would militate against his profits, by abridging the sale of the works, filed a bill in Chancery against the doctor. When the doctor was informed of G—'s proceedings in Chancery against him, he said to the friend who had made the communication, "Poor man, I pity him! for though I should live these twenty years, it is not likely to come to a hearing!"—"Ay," said his friend; "but suppose the master of the rolls was to give a decree in G—'s favor, what would you do then?"—"Why," replied the doctor, "I would appeal to the chancellor against the decree; and if he confirmed it, I would postpone it to the next century, by lodging an appeal to the House of Lords." However, as "miracles will never cease," it so happened, that in a comparatively short time G— obtained a decree in his favour, by which the annuity was reduced to the last-named sum, two hundred pounds; and as the funds of the doctor were not sufficient to defeat the ends of justice in accordance with his threat-

ened procrastination, he was compelled to submit. This decision incensed the doctor so highly, that he vowed he would have his revenge on G—, which he eventually accomplished, by living nearly twenty years afterwards.

The King's Theatre opened for the season on the 7th of December, with Winter's serious opera, 'Il ratto di Proserpine,' in which Grassini and Braham were greatly admired; and on the 20th of December Mrs. Billington appeared in Bach's serious opera, 'La clemenza di Scipione.' In this fine opera her bravura, with obligato accompaniments for violin, oboe, violoncello, and flute, by Weichsell, Harrington, Linley, and Ashe, formed a delectable treat. The brilliancy of Mrs. Billington's execution was surprising, and the applause bestowed on it was immense.

John Christian Bach, the composer of this opera, was son of Sebastian Bach. Very early in life, being deprived of the instructions of his father, he became, under the scholarship of his brother, Charles Philip Emanuel, a fine performer on keyed instruments; but on quitting him, and going to Italy, where his chief study was the composition of vocal music, he for many years neglected the practice of the harpsichord, farther than merely to compose for, or to accompany a voice.

When he arrived in England, his style of play-

ing was so much admired, that he recovered a good deal of what his hand had lost by disuse; but he never was able to reinstate it with force and readiness sufficient for great difficulties; and in general his compositions for the piano-forte are such as ladies can execute with little trouble. The allegros rather resemble bravura songs than instrumental pieces for the display of great execution, on which account they lose much of their effect when played without the accompaniments, which are admirable, and so masterly and interesting to an audience, that want of hand or complication in the harpsichord part is never discovered.

Bach was invited to London to compose for the Italian Opera; and in 1763 his 'Orione o sia Diana vendicata' was performed, and extremely applauded by a numerous audience. All judges of music perceived the emanations of genius that were evident through every part of it; but they were chiefly struck with the richness of the harmony, the ingenious texture of the parts; and above all, with the new and happy use he had made of wind-instruments, this being the first time that clarionets had admission in our opera orchestra.

There are many admirable airs in the operas he composed while in England, which have remained long in favour. The richness of the accompani-

ments, however, perhaps deserves more praise than the originality of the melodies. But these are always natural, elegant, and in the best style of Italy at the time he came over. The Neapolitan school, where he studied, is manifest in his cantilena; and the science of his father and brother (Charles Philip Emanuel), in his harmony.

Bach had not long been in London before he had the honour of being appointed chamber-musician and music-master to her Majesty, in which office he continued until the time of his death, in the year 1782. The operas of this master are the first in which da capos disappeared, and which about this time began to be generally discontinued, the second part being incorporated with the first: to which, after modulating into the fifth of the key, the singer generally returned.

Bach seems to have been the first composer who maintained the law of contrast as a principle. Before his time, though we frequently meet with contrast in the works of other composers, this seems to have been accidental. Bach, in his symphonies and other incidental pieces, as well as in his songs, seldom failed, after a rapid and noisy passage, to introduce one that was slow and soothing. His symphonies are considered infinitely more original than either his songs or his harpsi-

chord pieces. His symphony for a double orchestra in the key of C (composed for his own concerts) is perhaps one of the most original, noble, and effective compositions ever heard. I have often listened to it with delight.

END OF VOL. I.

PRINTED BY A. J. VALPY, RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.

6·9·88